



## DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

# IMPERIAL RHETORIC AND THE FINNISH OTHER IN RUSSIAN LITERATURE

In selected works of Aleksandr Puškin and  
Fëdor Dostojevskij

**Tuomas Taavila**

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Essay/Thesis	15 hp
Programme and/or course:	Language and Intercultural Communication (Russian)
Level:	Second Cycle
Semester/year:	St/2017
Supervisor:	Svetlana Polsky
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# Abstract

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Key words:	Russian Empire, Finland, literature, Aleksandr Puškin, Fëdor Dostojevskij, nation building, imperial rhetoric, devices of colonization

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Inspired by the ongoing debate on Russia's imperial revival, this paper is set to explore earlier manifestations of Russian imperial rhetoric in Russian literature of the 1800s. The second aim of this study is to analyse the imperial rhetoric with reference to one of Russia's neighbouring countries, Finland. In these regards, this essay assumes that the Finns and Finland played a role in Russian nation building of the 1800s and, further, that Russian literature mediated this process. The questions asked are: How are the Finns depicted in Russian literature and what are the reasons behind it?

As to the analytical considerations, this paper will primarily draw from conceptions uttered in studies of nationalism, colonial theory, and literature. In connection to Russian imperial rhetoric and the depiction of the Finns in Russian literature, the overarching practice of 'othering', i.e. the characterization of Finns as 'Others', is established. The theories and analytical devices form the base for the analysis of the material.

The material of this study consists, firstly, of two poems by Russian national poet Aleksandr Puškin, *Klevetnikam Rossij (To the Calumniators of Russia)* and *Mednyj vsadnik (The Bronze Horseman)*. Secondly, this study will draw from the fictional and non-fictional literary work of Fëdor Dostojevskij. The selection of Dostojevskijs's writings will be limited to relevant thoughts expressed on the Russian nation and the depiction of Finns and Finland.

The results of this study show that Puškin and Dostojevskij contributed to a 'textual victory' of the Russian colonizer over the colonized Finns. By applying possessing devices and devices of inferiorization the authors depicted the Finns as 'Others', against whom they defined the Russian imperial nation. Furthermore, it is essential to note that in colonizing the Finn, Puškin and Dostojevskij not only colonized an external other, but internal subjects of the Russian Empire as well. In this regard, the present paper can also be read as an addition to the study of Russian internal colonization.

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# 1. Introduction

In recent years, the (primarily Western) fear of Russia's imperial revival, or also known as Russia's 're-imperialisation', has known a lot of scholarly attention.<sup>1</sup> When asking about the symptoms of Russia's imperial revival, one can, on one hand, refer to a more assertive foreign policy (Ukraine, Syria) and, on the other, to certain features of the official Kremlin rhetoric. In terms of the official rhetoric, a prime example for its allegedly imperialistic nature is given with Russian officials referring to its ex-Soviet-borderlands as Russia's 'near abroad' ('bližneje zarubežje') and by declaring this zone as one of 'privileged interests'. The term of the 'near abroad' first and foremost encompasses the former states of the Soviet Union, all being either contiguous to, or in close vicinity of, the Russian Federation. Drawing from this, the description of this rhetoric as being of expansionist nature does not seem far-fetched at all. Moreover, these pronouncements do seemingly not consist of empty words, as Russia can be viewed to have proven by its actions on the Crimean peninsula, where Russia's annexation of Crimea led to an enlargement of Russian territory and an increase in its population.

## 1.1. Aim and method

Inspired by the debate on Russia's imperial revival, this paper is set to explore earlier manifestations of Russian imperial rhetoric. More precisely, it will look for examples of Russian imperial rhetoric and consciousness in Russian literature. In order to achieve this, the present paper aims to undertake a qualitative content analysis of the selected literature. What is more, it will do so in adherence to the theoretical and historical framework, which will be set up in chapter 2.

Besides from picking out literary manifestations of Russia's self-perception and -definition as an empire as a central theme, this paper will focus on Russia's relations to one of its neighbouring countries, Finland. Even though Finland, due to not being a former Soviet satellite state, is not included in the contemporary notion of the 'near abroad', Finnish-Russian relations make for an interesting field of study. This, for instance, stems from the fact that the Grand Duchy of Finland was part of the Russian Empire for a longer period of time than what the contemporary Finnish state has been independent. Finland this year celebrates 100 years of independence, which was preceded by an epoch under Russian imperial rule in 1809-1917.

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<sup>1</sup> The ideas presented in this passage are all inspired by Dmitri Trenin's analysis of Russian-Western relations. Cf. Trenin, D. (2016). *Should we fear Russia?* Cambridge [etc.] : Polity Press.

But where exactly does Finland come in when addressing the theme of Russian imperialism in literature? The answer to this question simultaneously constitutes a thesis of this paper. It is an assumption of this essay that Finland and the Finns, next to other national communities, played a role in Russian imperial and national identity politics. Furthermore, it is assumed that these processes were mediated by Russian literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, resulting in a “textual victory”<sup>2</sup> over the colonized Finns. In connection with this, a major aim of this study consists of tracing the Russian imperial and national rhetoric with Finland and the Finns as a reference point.

## 1.2. Material

Even though the notion of empire has deep roots in Russian (cultural) history, the search will commence with the examination of selected literary products of the Golden Age of Russian Poetry, which roughly encompasses the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Especially in a number of lyrical works by Aleksandr Puškin (1799-1837), the designated Russian national poet, one can find the fascination for empire being particularly present. More precisely, two poems by Puškin, i.e. *Klevetnikam Rossij* (*To the Calumniators of Russia*), published in 1831, and *Mednyj vsadnik* (*The Bronze Horseman*) of 1833 will form the basis for the examination. The analysis of Puškin’s poems will also form the primary focus of this study. In addition to that, this paper will examine the image of Finland and the Finn in selected novels by Fjodor Dostojevskij (1821-1881). Dostojevskij’s works are partly chosen for his evident affinity for the Russian nation, a notion he adapted from his much-idolized predecessor, Puškin. In these regards, this paper will draw from Dostojevskij’s *Dnevnik pisatelja* (*A Writer’s Diary*). Also, Dostojevskij’s depiction of the Finn has hitherto come to know very little academic attention, which adds to the relevance of this study. The relevant text passages concerning the depiction of Finns and Finland are extracted from Dostojevskij’s novels *Prestuplenie i nakazanie* (*Crime and Punishment*) and *Bratja Karamazovy* (*The Brothers Karamazov*), and further his short story *Mal’čik y Christa na elke* (*The Heavenly Christmas Tree*). The questions pondered during the course of this essay include among others the following: How are the Finns depicted? In what context are these depictions to be understood? What is their function?

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Thompson, E. (2000). *Imperial knowledge : Russian literature and colonialism*(Contributions to the study of world literature, 99). Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, p. 2.

In what follows, the abovementioned patriotic texts by Puškin are viewed as the beginning of a specific tradition of depicting the Finn. In connection with this, the selection of Dostojevskij's prose is viewed as, for the most part, reproducing this mostly unfavourable image. What is more, these literary works present Finland and the Finns as inferior 'Others', against whom the authors as representatives of the Russian cultural elite defined Russia and Russianness. Also, the colonization of Finland and the Finns by the Russian Empire can be viewed to echo in Puškin's and Dostojevskij's literary contributions. At this point, however, I want to mark that the image conveyed by the literature chosen for this paper distorts the all-over image of Finland in Russian literature. When conducting a full-scale examination of this image, one can conclude that the image of the Finn is multifaceted. For instance, Finland has even come to be depicted as an 'imperial idyll.'<sup>3</sup> Be that as it may, the image portrayed in this paper should be understood in the context of national and imperial identity building.

## **2. Analytical considerations**

This chapter functions as the setting-up of both a theoretical and historical framework for the study. Due to the assumption that the theories, definitions, and contexts relevant for this paper demand thorough discussion, the focus on the analytical considerations will be substantial. Besides from addressing the issues as denoted in the table of contents, I will additionally aim at highlighting traits of Russian cultural and political history, which I believe will prove to be helpful in terms of background information and analysis.

### **2.1. Nation and nationalism in Russia**

Even though the notions of nationalism, imperialism, and colonialism are closely related to each other and also show a high level of interdependence, I wish to enter the venture of proposing a causal relation between the concepts. Against the background of Finland, or the Grand Duchy of Finland ('Velikoje Knjažestvo Finljandij') as it was its official designation as a colonial subject of the Russian Empire, I want to refer to a cause-and-effect chain constructed by US-based academic Ewa Thompson regarding Russian nationalism: "Russian nationalism is both aggressive and defensive, and in its aggressive mode it has transformed itself into an imperial appetite for colonial

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Minard-Törmänen, N. *An imperial idyll : Finland in Russian travelogues (1810-1860)*. (Doctoral dissertation). Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 2016.

possessions contiguous to ethnic Russia.”<sup>4</sup> The quote inspired this paper to start its analytical considerations with discussing the concepts of nation and nationalism, followed by a discussion of imperialism and the notion of ‘empire’ and, thereafter, moving on to debating colonialism – all with a focus on the context provided by the Russian Empire.

First, a definition of nationalism itself is in order. Here, the distinction between the concept of nationalism and the idea of a ‘nation’ is of great importance, as noted by Swedish sociologist Per Månson. Månson understands nationalism as an ideological expression for the social and political movements that try to utilize the nation as a mobilizing symbol.<sup>5</sup> In connection to this, he states that the idea of ‘nation’ indicates a conception of a common origin, a common future, or of a perceived common ‘destiny’.<sup>6</sup> Further, when discussing the concepts of nation and nationalism, I wish to point to the exegesis of a much-cited researcher within this field of study – Benedict Anderson. Månson’s concept of nation can be viewed as following the path set by Anderson, who defines a nation as “an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.”<sup>7</sup> Anderson builds his conception of nation as being imagined on notions expressed by political scientist Hugh-Seton Watson and arguments the point by stating that “members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”<sup>8</sup> Further, the community is ‘limited’ “because (...) [n]o nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind” and further, “it is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.”<sup>9</sup> In addition to the definition of nations, Anderson gives advice regarding the manner in which to examine and analyse respective imagined communities: “Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined.”<sup>10</sup> It is first and foremost this style, which Anderson refers to, that is of interest for this study.

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Thompson, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Månson, P. (1997). Stat, nation och nationalism i Ryssland : Ett historiskt perspektiv. I Rikard Larsson (Red.), *Nationalism i förskingring : Arbetsrapport från ett symposium som hölls av Europaprogrammet 17 oktober 1995* (pp. 7-52). Göteborg: [Historiska institutionen, Univ.], p. 8. Månson’s reflections on nationalism are inspired by: Østergaard, U. (1996). Stat, nation og national identitet. I Heine Andersen og Lars Bo Kaspersen (Red.), *Klassisk og moderne samfundsteori* (pp. 474-93). København: Reitzels.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined communities : Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (Rev. ed.). London: Verso, p. 6.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Anderson, p. 6. See also: Seton-Watson, H. (1977). *Nations and states : An enquiry into the origins of nations and the politics of nationalism*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Anderson (2006), p. 7. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Ibid. Emphasis added (TT).

Further, the complex concept of national identity needs to be addressed. At first, Ingrid Piller suggests approaching it as a highly pervasive discursive construction.<sup>11</sup> Following her advice, I have extracted some relevant features of said concept as defined in *A Dictionary of Media and Communication*. In reference to Anderson and reaching further, national identity is defined as

“[t]he public image of an imagined community (...), narratively constructed and transmitted by social institutions, in particular the educational system (...) and the mass media (...). Such essentialist representations seek to elicit individual identification with (and discursive reproduction of) a supposedly shared identity which claims to transcend other dimensions of identity such as class and ethnicity.”<sup>12</sup>

When applying this modern definition to the realities of the 1800s in Russia with the aim of discerning prevalent social institutions of that time, this paper suggest that literature (among other disciplines), and here especially the works of Puškin and Dostojevskij, carried that role. In line with this, Russia has often been referred to as a ‘literature-centred culture’, meaning that literature in Russian culture and society has been assigned exceptional value in terms of identity building. Michajl Goloubkov, for instance, depicts how Russian literature up until approximately the demise of the Soviet Union, was a form of “historical socialization”, or that it shaped a “national cultural code and formed a manner to feel and think, which did characterize Russian person [sic!].”<sup>13</sup>

As for the ‘style’, to use Anderson’s term, in which nations and national identities are constructed, this essay suggests that it often occurs by means of comparison. On the subject of comparison, I at this point want to introduce a central concept of this essay – the concept of the ‘Other’<sup>14</sup>. When addressing the concept of the Other, one sooner or later finds oneself referring to Edward Said’s canonical *Orientalism*.<sup>15</sup> Even though Said in this work studied Western conceptions of the Orient, so are his considerations also applicable for the Russo-Finnish context. Regarding the constitutive relationship of the West and the Orient, Said states that “the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience.”<sup>16</sup> Here, from Western perspective, the Orient functions as the Other. My intention is to discern this contrasted juxtapositioning in the Russo-Finnish context. Important to note is, further, that both orientalism and the Other are concepts closely connected with the distribution of power. Against this background, Said views

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. Piller, I. (2011). *Intercultural communication: A critical introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 65.

<sup>12</sup> Chandler, D., & Munday, R. (2011). national identity. *A dictionary of media and communication* (1.st ed.). Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press. Retrieved 2017-05-08 from <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199568758.001.0001/acref-9780199568758-e-1834>

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Goloubkov, M. (2013). Literature and the Russian cultural code at the beginning of the 21st century. *Journal of Eurasian Studies*, 4(1), 107-113. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euras.2012.02.001>

<sup>14</sup> When referring to said concept, this paper will make use of the following spelling: the Other.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Said, E. (2014). *Orientalism*. London: Penguin Books.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-2.



“[o]rientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient.”<sup>17</sup> The bottom line on the subject of the Other is that through comparison of oneself to the Other, one defines oneself. In order to illuminate on the functions of the Other and, further, on the practice of ‘othering’<sup>18</sup>, I suggest following the description of Jyrki Outinen, who in turn leans on Anderson’s reflections on the imaginative nature of nations:<sup>19</sup>

“[O]thering can be seen as an imagined identity politics for a given ideological and political aim. Othering is the discourse to describe a number of human things, lands, groups, cultures, religions, manners etc., by using comparison and difference, and hence by using hierarchy and value judgements. It is often the easiest way to form a priori essentialist coherence in a fuzzy world and even fuzzier past.”<sup>20</sup>

In terms of the selected material for this essay, the poems by Puškin and the writings of Dostojevskij, we can assume that, in dealings with foreign entities, both made use of practices of ‘othering’ with the purpose of shaping an imperial Russian national identity.

Now it is time to dwell on specific Russian features of nationalism. As already emanates from the abovementioned quote, Thompson distinguishes between two types of nationalism, i.e. defensive and aggressive nationalism.<sup>21</sup> Defensive nationalism, on one hand, is distinguished as usually emerging against the background of defending one’s own national identity, while aggressive nationalism “strives to export identity and acquire land on which Others live.”<sup>22</sup> Here, the example of aggressive nationalism can serve as an illustration of just how close it is located to the neighbouring concepts of imperialism and colonialism. That aside, which type of nationalism, then, makes for the typical Russian one? According to Thompson Russian nationalism has known to take both the defensive and the aggressive form.<sup>23</sup> This, however, does not mean that every case of erupting Russian nationalism would allow a straightforward labelling of clearly being one of the two; the lines here can be blurred. Also in our case of Finland being the reference point, as we soon shall see, the classification of Russian nationalism being either of defensive or aggressive character is not entirely unambiguous.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> When referring to the practice of ‘othering’, this paper will make use of the following spelling: ‘othering’.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Outinen, J. (2016). What Went Wrong in the Stories of Otherness? Finnish Soldiers of the Russo-Turkish War on the Road to Crushing Political Borders and Crossing Cultural Barriers, 1877-1878. *Ennen ja nyt*, 2016/01. doi:<http://www.ennenjanyt.net/2016/02/what-went-wrong-in-the-stories-of-otherness-finnish-soldiers-of-the-russo-turkish-war-on-the-road-to-crushing-political-borders-and-crossing-cultural-barriers-1877-1878/> ; Outinen refers to an earlier edition of Anderson’s *Imagined communities*, cf. Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined communities : Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (Rev. and extended ed.). London: Verso, p. 199-202. ; For the same content, cf. Anderson (2006), pp. 199-202.

<sup>20</sup> Outinen.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Thompson, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Ibid.

## 2.2. Empire, imperialism, and Russian cultural history

The initial mentioning of Russia's alleged imperial revival is to be understood as an allusion to both the Soviet Union and, more importantly for our case, the Russian Empire (1721-1917). With this in mind, a definition of the concept of empire and, in connection to that, imperialism, are in order. This essay will draw from Edward Said's reflections on said concepts that go as follows:

“At some very basic level, imperialism means thinking about, settling on, controlling land that you do not possess, that is distant, that is lived on and owned by others (...) As I shall use the term, ‘imperialism’ means the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory; (...) As Michael Doyle puts it: ‘Empire is a relationship, formal or informal, in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another political society. It can be achieved by force, by political collaboration, by economic, social, or cultural dependence. Imperialism is simply the process or policy of establishing or maintaining an empire.’<sup>24,25</sup>

As concerns imperialism, it shows a strong presence in Russian cultural and political history. Touching on the theme of the alleged re-imperialisation, slavacist Per-Arne Bodin takes the debate to the next level in stating that the ambition of being a superpower, or in other words, the passion for imperial status, is discernible as a constant narrative throughout Russian cultural and political history.<sup>26</sup> Further, in preparation for the analysis of Aleksands Puškin's poems, Bodin additionally introduces another recurring characteristic of Russian cultural identity: the perceived feeling of being surrounded by enemies. Referring to this, Bodin notes that this conception probably makes for the most important doctrine in Russian security politics starting from the 1200s and continuing as long as to the dissolution of the Soviet Union.<sup>27</sup> This view, as we shall see, is strongly present in Puškin's *Klevetnikam Rossij*. The third and final constant of Russian cultural and political history relevant for this essay also touches the issue of Russian national identity. Kristian Gerner points to the complex historical relationship of Russia and Europe by marking that Russia and Europe form one another's signifying others, meaning that throughout both Russian and European cultural history, one and the other have sought to define oneself against the other.<sup>28</sup>

Further, it is of importance to note that both the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union were multi-ethnic states. This, however, did not mean that the metropolitan centre always would treat all ethnicities in equal terms.<sup>29</sup> Both empires had policies of Russification (or Russianization)

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<sup>24</sup> Doyle, M. (1986). *Empires* (Cornell studies in comparative history). Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, p. 45.

<sup>25</sup> Said, E. (1993). *Culture and imperialism*. New York: Knopf, p. 7,9. ; See also: Thompson, pp. 32-33.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Bodin, P. (2006). *Ryssland och Europa : En kulturhistorisk studie* (2. utg., rev.. ed., Vitterhetsakademiens skriftserie om Europa). Stockholm: Natur och kultur, pp. 63-72.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Gerner, K. (2011). *Ryssland : En europeisk civilisationshistoria*. Lund: Historiska media.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Månson, pp. 10-11; Cf. Seton-Watson, H. (1961). *The new imperialism*. Chester Springs, PA: Dufour Editions, pp. 23-30.

implemented, which entailed discriminative policies against non-Russians and the promotion of ethnic Russian political, cultural, and linguistic pre-eminence aiming at the assimilation of non-Russians.<sup>30</sup> As for the case of Finland, policies of Russification were not implemented in the timeframe relevant for the present paper.

## **2.3. Finland: An anomaly in the Russian Empire**

### **2.3.1 Features of colonialism in imperial Russia**

In order to outline some key features of the relationship between Finland and the Russian Empire, some additional concepts require defining. First of all, due to the fact that the Russian Empire, as a consequence of the Finnish War (1808-1809), annexed Finland from the Kingdom of Sweden, the notion of colonialism needs to be discussed. In connection to the earlier definition of imperialism, colonialism according to Said is “the implanting of settlements on distant territory (...).”<sup>31</sup> Further, it can be viewed as “almost always a consequence of imperialism (...).”<sup>32</sup> In the case of Finland, Russian colonialism primarily constituted in the stationing of imperial soldiers on the territory of the Grand Duchy.<sup>33</sup>

Now, let us move on to colonialism in Russia specifically. Here, I again intend to draw from the material delivered by Thompson’s analysis of Russian colonialism in literature. Her approach to the question of the specific character and form of Russian colonialism is to compare it to Western colonialism. In addition to that, she even takes the aforementioned concept of national identity into consideration. Regarding Western colonialism she states that national concerns often were overshadowed by concerns of race and overseas conquest.<sup>34</sup> Here, the colonizing of Africa and the Americas by European conquerors can function as prime examples. Russian colonialism, on the other hand, “leaned heavily on national identity and contiguous expansion.”<sup>35</sup> Thompson further notes that “[i]n the Russian case, territorial conquests were followed by incorporation into Russia or imposition of governments subservient to Russian interests.”<sup>36</sup> Due to colonizing and incorporating

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. Weeks, T. (2004). Russification. *Encyclopedia.com*. Retrieved 2017-05-18 from <http://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/russification>

<sup>31</sup> Said (1994), p. 9.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Pohjan Prikaati. (2008). *Venäläiset joukot Suomessa 1809 – 1917*. Retrieved 2017-05-15 from [http://www.pohjanprikaatinkilta.fi/PohPr/perinnejoukot/Venalaiset\\_joukot\\_Suomessa.htm](http://www.pohjanprikaatinkilta.fi/PohPr/perinnejoukot/Venalaiset_joukot_Suomessa.htm)

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Thompson, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

the neighbouring territory of Finland, the actions of the Russian Empire here meet the criteria of contiguous expansion.

Against the background of colonialism and in connection with Bodin's thoughts on constants in Russian history and especially the perception of being surrounded by enemies, I want to point to yet another similar trait in Russian cultural and political history. In his work on Russia's imperial experience, Aleksandr Ètkind, first, refers to the notorious *Long Telegram* (1946)<sup>37</sup> of George Kennan, in which the latter among other things speaks of a "traditional and instinctive Russian sense of insecurity" with the interesting and important addition that this "neurotic view"<sup>38</sup> rather was linked to Russian rulers than ordinary Russian people.<sup>39</sup> Secondly, picking up on Kennan's assertion of the typical Russian neurotic view, Ètkind states the following:

"Throughout the larger part of Russian history, a neurotic fear, which is mixed with desire, focused not only on the enemies beyond the borders but also on the space inside them. This internal space happened to be populated, somewhat unfortunately for the rulers, by the subject peoples, Russians and non-Russians."<sup>40</sup>

Ètkind here builds the background and the framework in which the Russian practice of internal colonization took place. Regarding colonization in the context of imperial Russia, Ètkind interestingly suggests the practice of colonization being simultaneously external and internal, meaning that the practice of colonization not only was directed against external Others but also against one's own people. Ètkind further names an interesting conception. When asking about the components that always constitute colonization, Ètkind refers to the notions of culture and politics, which form an unusual symbiosis: "Whenever we talk about the colonization processes, we see cultural hegemony and political domination working together in some kind of coalition, correlation, or confrontation."<sup>41</sup> In connection to this, he suggests that "internal colonization connotes the culture-specific domination inside the national borders, actual or imagined."<sup>42</sup>

In the face of the literary material of this study, the concept of internal colonization will be particularly relevant when discussing both Puškin's verse and Dostojevskij's prose. But now, it is crucial to enlarge upon the Russo-Finnish relationship during the period of time that the Grand Duchy constituted the Western periphery of the Russian Empire.

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<sup>37</sup> According to Ètkind, the *Long Telegram* can be seen to have ignited the Cold War. Cf. Ètkind, A. (2011). *Internal colonization : Russia's imperial experience*. Cambridge: Polity, p. 4.

<sup>38</sup> Kennan, G. (1946). *Long Telegram*. *National Security Archive*.

doi:<http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/coldwar/documents/episode-1/kennan.htm> ; Quoted from: Ètkind, p. 4.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Ètkind, p. 4.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., pp. 4-5.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-7.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

### 2.3.2. Finland under Russian imperial rule: coalition and confrontation

This year (2017) Finland celebrates 100 years of independence from Russia. The following is reserved for conducting a historical contextualisation of the Russo-Finnish relations with a focus on the time of Finland being a Russian colonial subject (1809-1917) and, to be even more precise, on the time preceding the official policies of Russification imposed on the Grand Duchy. These practices are viewed to have begun ca 1899 with the aim of incorporating Finland more effectively into the Empire.<sup>43</sup> The setting-up of the timeframe is legitimized by the circumstance that the latest novel discussed in this essay, Dostojevskij's *Bratja Karamazovy*, was published in 1879-80.

As befits the specific features of Russian colonialism uttered by Thompson, Finland got incorporated into the Russian Empire as a result of Russia defeating the Kingdom of Sweden in the Finnish war in 1809. Thus, an age-long history of Finland belonging to Sweden was ended and Finland's function as the former puffer against East underwent a change and would henceforth function as puffer against Sweden.<sup>44</sup> The Finnish war, however, did not make for the only war fought between Swedes and Russians, of which there in the centuries preceding the Finnish war had been several. Notable here is that all Russo-Swedish wars had without exception been fought on Finnish territory.<sup>45</sup> And this experience would of course leave its mark. According to Finnish historian Timo Vihavainen, there is no doubt about that the constant warring lays at the ground of what in Finland is referred to as 'ryssäviha', meaning 'hate for Russians'.<sup>46</sup>

The incorporation of Finland into the Russian Empire, however, was not accompanied by an escalation of Russo-Finnish relations. Quite on the contrary, the autonomy Finland was granted was considerably more extensive than ever under Swedish rule.<sup>47</sup> In reference to this, Swiss historian Andreas Kappeler points to statements made by Russian Tsar Aleksandr I already in 1808, in which the Tsar guaranteed the Finnish population the recognition of the status quo. Following the aforementioned definition of empire by Doyle, one can conclude that the Russian Tsar (metropolitan centre) controlled the effective political sovereignty of Finland, and that the political situation thereby mirrored the definition of empire as a formal relationship. Further, the extensive inner autonomy manifested itself in the setting-up of a Finnish parliament, the establishing of an

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<sup>43</sup> Vihavainen, T. (2010). Ryssland i Finlands historia: Några särdrag som påverkar nutiden. *Nordisk Østforum*, 24(2), p. 187.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Ibid., pp. 187-88.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Ibid., p. 186.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Ibid., p. 186. The semantics of 'ryssäviha' entails a strong anti-Russian sentiment with the word 'ryssä' being a pejorative expression for 'Russian' and 'hate' being the direct translation of 'viha' (TT).

<sup>47</sup> Kappeler, A. (1992). *Russland als Vielvölkerreich : Entstehung - Geschichte - Zerfall*. München: Beck, p. 88.

independent Finnish coinage, and even the acceptance of a small Finnish army, just to name a few features. Also the next Tsar in succession, Nikolaj I (1825-1855), continued to guarantee the exceptional position of the Grand Duchy of Finland. Further, Finland experienced an economic and cultural upswing in the 1800s.<sup>48</sup>

The enjoying of said special privileges and the late implementation of official Russification in comparison to other Russian colonies, have prompted the Grand Duchy of Finland occasionally been referred to as, quite significantly, an “anomaly in the empire.”<sup>49</sup> Why, though, was Finland granted such special status? One of the reasons, as noted by both Vihavainen and Kappeler, surely was the precarious geopolitical climate at that time. The sovereignty of the Russian heartland, especially with St. Petersburg as the imperial capital, was reckoned to be better protected by a province inhabited by content and loyal subjects to the Tsar.<sup>50</sup> Having this in mind, the official Russian imperial appetite for Finland is best approached in terms of military strategy.<sup>51</sup>

Apart from serving Russian geopolitical interests, however, the vast autonomy that Finland was granted with also laid the groundwork for Finnish nation building.<sup>52</sup> What additionally contributed to the separateness of Finland is that the border between the two communities stayed very much real.<sup>53</sup> One can, in this regard, even refer to the existence of a language border. In this regard, Vihavainen notes that the formerly subdued Finnish language, got recognized as the second official language next to Swedish by Russian imperial decree. What is more, the Russian language was neither taught at universities nor schools.<sup>54</sup> Also, the amount of ethnic Russians moving to or living in Finland during the 1800s was low: At the end of the 1800s only ca 0,2% of the total population constituted of Russians,<sup>55</sup> meaning that intercultural contact on Finnish territory was scarce. Even though Russian emigration to Finland only constituted a small phenomenon, so did Finns emigrate and settle to Russia in big numbers. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century ca 100 000 Finns resided in the region of Ingria and in the environs of St. Petersburg. Further ca 20 000 had moved to St.

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<sup>48</sup> For the facts and reflections expressed in this paragraph, cf. Kappeler, pp. 88-89.

<sup>49</sup> Hirvasaho, I. K. (1997). *A stepchild of the empire: Finland in Russian colonial discourse* (Order No. 9803981). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (304324903). Retrieved 2017-05-08 from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/304324903?accountid=11162>, p. 19.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Kappeler, pp. 89-90. ; See also: Vihavainen, p. 187.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Nyberg, p. 83.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Kappeler, p. 90.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Vihavainen, p. 187. Quoted from: Ketola, Kari (2007) *Ryssän koulussa: Suomalaiset Venäjän stipendiaatit autonomian aikana 1812–1917*. Helsinki: Finemor.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Vihavainen, p. 187. Quoted from: Kurkinen, Pauli (1984) *Venäläiset Suomessa 1809–1917*. Helsinki: Suomen historiallinen seura.

Petersburg itself under the 1800s.<sup>56</sup> The amount is particularly high when considered against the background of the total population of Finland at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century accounting for ca 2,7 million.<sup>57</sup> The St. Petersburg Finns will be of special interest to our case since it is these Finns that the St. Petersburg –based author Fëdor Dostojevskij usually refers to.

Touching the point of Finnish cultural renaissance, I want to point to the reports of a Prussian Baron, August von Haxthausen, who travelled the Russian Empire during 1847-1852 on his beneficiary's Tsar Nikolaj I payroll.<sup>58</sup> Haxthausen's travels to Russia prompted him to the following observation:

“Russian language and customs were not disseminated in any of the conquered territories, either in Finland, the Baltic provinces, Poland, or even in Georgia, although the latter has the same religion and church as Russia.... The countries subdued by Russia possess for the most part a culture which is superior to that of the conqueror.”<sup>59</sup>

This perception of Russian civilizational inferiority in comparison to some of its colonies Thompson discerns as an additional characteristic of Russian colonialism.<sup>60</sup> According to Thompson, there is much evidence of that under Russian imperial rule some of the “colonized felt superior to the colonizers. In parts of the Russian and Soviet empires, a unique situation existed where the imperialist was not looked up by those over whom he exercised authority.”<sup>61</sup>

Apparently, the economic and cultural boom, taking place in the free space of the autonomous Grand Duchy, also led to the emergence of nationalist tendencies in Finland. An example for these tendencies stems from the literary work of the Finnish national poet, Johan Ludvig Runeberg (1804-1877). Runeberg, much to the dismay of Russian nationalists, in his long poem *Fänrik Ståls sägner*<sup>62</sup> (*The tales of Ensign Stål*)<sup>63</sup>, depicted the events of the Finnish war in a patriotic manner.<sup>64</sup> In relation to the emerge of nationalism in Russian colonies, which as just shown also is applicable to Finland, Thompson indicates a “Russian *resentiment* at not being regarded with due respect

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<sup>56</sup> Cf. Vihavainen, p. 187. Quoted from: Engman, M. (1983) *S:t Petersburg och Finland: migration och influens 1703–1917*. Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Vihavainen, p. 187.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Thompson, p. 18.

<sup>59</sup> Haxthausen, A., & Starr, S. (1972). *Studies on the interior of Russia*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 310. ; See also: Thompson, p. 18.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Thompson, p. 75.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>62</sup> Runeberg, J. L. (1927) *Fänrik Ståls sägner*. Stockholm: Bonnier.

<sup>63</sup> The Swedish original was published in two parts, the first in 1848 and the second in 1860.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Nyberg, p. 84. For a discussion on patriotism in *The tales of Ensign Stål*, cf. Länsiluoto, L. (2008). *Toiseuden tarinat, uhan kuvat. : Venäjä-kuva ja suomalaiskansallisen identiteetin rakentaminen 1970- ja 1990-luvun peruskoulun historian oppikirjoissa*. (Master's thesis). University of Helsinki, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Social Science History. Retrieved 2017-05-08 from <http://hdl.handle.net/10138/18280>, pp. 121-123.

(...).”<sup>65</sup> This resentment was felt especially strong by those Russian elites with a soft spot for nationalism. Thompson, in this spirit, remarks that

“[t]he awareness of this unusual relation between the colonizer and the colonized was strong in the nineteenth century; writers such as Pushkin and Dostoevskii felt obliged to lash back at those who did not show enough respect for the Russian empire.”<sup>66</sup>

On the whole, though, both Russian and Finnish historians today view the century-long Russo-Finnish coexistence in a positive light.<sup>67</sup>

## 2.4 Authors as nation builders and devices of colonization

Moving on, it is time to consider the role of authors in nation building. Further, I intend to discuss the style in which (national) communities can be imagined. To begin with, however, I want to point the attention to what Ingrid Piller has to say about a key area of interest for the field of intercultural communication: “I [IP] regard it as the fundamental research question of the field of intercultural communication to ask who makes culture relevant to whom in which context for which purposes.”<sup>68</sup>

Claire Kramsch, in reflecting on the implications of the concept of ‘culture’, finds herself in close proximity to Piller’s guideline. Kramsch approaches the concept of culture from a discourse-analytical point of view and marks it as a process that both includes and excludes. What is more, she adds that cultures are heterogeneous and constantly changing sites of struggle for power and recognition.<sup>69</sup> She, additionally, remarks that “[c]ultures, and especially national cultures, resonate with the voices of the powerful, and are filled with the voices of the powerless.”<sup>70</sup> These aspects, I think, are important to take into consideration when examining the national and colonial discourse led in the field of Russian literature. Further, before plunging into the analysis of the literary material, a short definition of literature is in order. For the purposes of this essay, the definition of literature as “all writings in prose and verse, esp. that of an imaginative or critical character (...)”<sup>71</sup>, as defined in *Webster’s New World College Dictionary* is sufficient.

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<sup>65</sup> Thompson, p. 18.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Vihavainen, p. 186.

<sup>68</sup> Piller, p. 13.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Kramsch, C. (1998). *Language and culture* (Oxford introductions to language study). Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 8-10.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>71</sup> Webster’s New World College Dictionary. (2010). *literature*. Retrieved 2017-05-16 from <http://www.yourdictionary.com/literature> ; See also: Hirvasaho, p. 1.



In reference to one central theme of this essay, the textual victory of Russian literature over the Finnish Other, it is clear that the ‘who’ in Piller’s abovementioned guideline constitutes of representatives of Russian literature, here portrayed by Puškin and Dostojevskij. Regarding the role authors played in Russian society, Thompson notes that “Russian authors/writers used their privileged positions as spokespersons for the growing empire to overshadow other discourses (...).”<sup>72</sup> Iida Hirvasaho, who specifically analysed the image of Finland in Russian colonial discourse by using Russian literature as material, voices similar thoughts in reference to the role of authors:

“As we see, the author is never an innocent party in the creation of colonial discourse, a mere unconscious agent of the cultural processes of his time. He both manipulates the culture’s givens and creates them.”<sup>73</sup>

Resulting from the abovementioned considerations, the ‘whom’ in Piller’s question is taken up by the recipients at home and abroad, the context is provided by the empire and thus also the concepts of nationalism, imperialism, and colonialism, and finally, the purposes are laid bare as the personal agendas of opinion makers like Puškin and Dostojevskij.

What exactly, though, is meant by Russian literature overshadowing ‘other discourses’ and, furthermore, what message is it that it wanted to convey? In order to begin answering that question, this paper wishes to refer to the “massive infusion into Russian cultural discourse of Russia’s great power status.”<sup>74</sup> Further, as to the discourses that were overshadowed, Thompson notes that “Russian literature mediated this process [of colonization]<sup>75</sup> by imposing on the conquered territories a narrative of Russian presence that elbowed out native concerns and the native story.”<sup>76</sup> In this sense, this essay understands the role and function of Russian authors and writers to be that of shapers of Russian national identity, and further, as nation builders. This thought is also strongly present in Thompson’s reflections. She, in this effect, goes even further in stating that literature can be assigned a double function: Firstly, literature can function as a “building block” and secondly, “as an expression of national identity.”<sup>77</sup>

At this point, a vital demarcation in respect to the just discussed must be expressed. Even though this essay broaches issues like national identity and the mobilization of nations by writers such as Puškin and Dostojevskij, it must be noted that the processes and movements depicted in the 1800s

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<sup>72</sup> Thompson, p. 2.

<sup>73</sup> Hirvasaho, p. 15.

<sup>74</sup> Thompson, p. 15.

<sup>75</sup> Own addition (TT).

<sup>76</sup> Thompson, p. 1.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

in Russia constituted, for the most part, an elite phenomenon. This is best illustrated by examining the literacy rate of that time. Even though there exist no reliable and accurate censuses from the early and mid-1800s Russia, the online publication *Our World in Data (OWID)* can point us in the approximate direction of just how low the level of literacy was at that time. According to estimations dating back to the years of 1820 and 1870, the literacy in the first case has been estimated at ca. 8% and in the second at 15%.<sup>78</sup> Also, it is equally important to note that the “group identity of ethnic elites differs from the identity of unlettered masses (...).”<sup>79</sup> Nevertheless, due to the fact that literature also functions as an expression of national identity and therefore not only exists to shape and manipulate it, one can assume that the works of Puškin and Dostojevskij could point to significant social tendencies within the multi-ethnic reality of the Russian Empire.

Now, how did said textual victory of the Russian imperialists over the subjugated regions and peoples occur? How is the metropolitan centre, Russia, depicted in comparison to its colonies? What characterises the style of the textual victory? What devices did they use? These are some of the key questions to be touched on now and soon thereafter during the analysis and discussion of the material.

Adhering to Hirvasaho’s earlier research on the matter, this essay suggests that the representatives of Russian imperial culture, i.e. the Russian writers in our case, made use of a “special ‘language’ that translates the colony into the imperial culture.”<sup>80</sup> Further, it is of paramount importance to note that in depicting the colonial subject, referring to it, or interpreting it, the imperial agent creates a manipulated image – “nor”, Hirvasaho remarks, “is there ever any intention to be accurate.”<sup>81</sup> As she rightfully observes in respect to the assignments of an imperial agent, so do they not lie in the objective description of the colonies (e.g. Finland) but, rather, in the description of them as peripheries of the Russian Empire, i.e. as subjugated colonies.<sup>82</sup> The bottom line here is that as an imperial agent within the domain of literature, one’s motive might well have been to create an image of the colony and the colonized people as inferior to the metropolitan core, resulting in a textual display of power and depiction of one’s own superiority. Moving on, “[t]his imperial

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<sup>78</sup> Cf. Roser, M. & Ortiz-Ospina, E. (2016). Literacy. *OurWorldInData.org*. Retrieved 2017-05-08 from <https://ourworldindata.org/literacy/> ; Roser and Ortiz-Ospina rely on the estimations offered in: Broadberry, S., & O’Rourke, K. (2010). *The Cambridge economic history of modern Europe. Vol. 1, 1700-1870*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>79</sup> Thompson, p. 6.

<sup>80</sup> Hirvasaho, p. 9.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Ibid., p. 10.

consciousness is the cornerstone on which the discourse is constructed; it dictates the kinds of tropes chosen and rhetoric imprinted.”<sup>83</sup>

As a source of inspiration and reference for said tropes and rhetoric, Hirvasaho has used David Spurr’s reflections in *The Rhetoric of Empire*, where Spurr marks that the language of, in his case, Western empires itself served imperial purposes.<sup>84</sup> In her dissertation, Hirvasaho demonstrates that Spurr’s concepts also can be applied for the context provided by the Russian colonial context. Further, Hirvasaho provides a useful description and summary of the devices in question:

“Colonial discourse consists of an enormous number of tropical devices on all levels of the text, including genre, narrative voice and point of view, allegorical representations, symbols, metaphorical representations, and other devices, including straightforward rhetorical claims, which comprise two main modes or tones of colonizing: the inferiorizing and possessing modes.”<sup>85</sup>

At this point, it should be marked that this paper considers said devices not as limited to colonial discourse alone but, rather, arguments simultaneously for their validity within the framework of nationalism. Here I follow the path paved by Thompson, who in this regard refers to “devices of nationalism.”<sup>86</sup> With this said, let us now closer examine what the inferiorizing and possessing modes involve. Beginning with the inferiorizing tone, which entails the belittling<sup>87</sup> of the Other, it can be achieved in several ways and, what is more, can demonstrate a strong variation in terms of whether the inferiorization, on one hand, occurs in a direct and unmistakable way or, on the other hand, in a more indirect and hidden fashion. Continuing on, an example for blunter methods can, for instance, be the usage of negative epithets (e.g. ‘disgusting’, ‘bad’) or the technique of direct description, where an unfavourable light is cast on the colonized land and its subjects for the purpose of comparing it to one’s own nation’s pre-eminence.<sup>88</sup>

As to the more indirect modes of inferiorization, Hirvasaho singles out the device of ‘primitivization’, with the help of which, as clearly emanates from the term itself, the colonial subject and his land are depicted as the primitive counterpart to the civilized metropolitan centre.<sup>89</sup> Thompson, finding herself close to the reflections of Hirvasaho, additionally identifies the tone of

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<sup>83</sup> Hirvasaho, p. 10. ; As to what a ‘trope’ is, *The Penguin dictionary of literary terms and literary theory* defines it as “any rhetorical or figurative device (...)”, which also suffices for the analysis within the scope of this essay. In: Cuddon, J., & Preston, C. (1999). trope. *The Penguin dictionary of literary terms and literary theory*. (4. ed. / rev. by C. E. Preston. ed.). London: Penguin.

<sup>84</sup> Spurr, D. (1993). *The rhetoric of empire : Colonial discourse in journalism, travel writing, and imperial administration* (Post-contemporary interventions). Durham: Duke University Press.

<sup>85</sup> Hirvasaho, pp. 10-11.

<sup>86</sup> Thompson, p. 6.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Hirvasaho, p.11.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Ibid., pp. 11-12.

‘trivialization’, and to be more precise, the “trivialization of national identity of the colonized peoples.”<sup>90</sup> Concluding the reflections on the devices of trivialization and primitivization, I want to point to the function of the genre of romanticism. With Aleksandr Puškin as an eminent representative, Hirvasaho’s thoughts on romanticism are of relevance:

“Romantic discourse accommodates the correct imperial world order: the primitivism and primordial chaos of the colony serve to underscore the order, normalcy, and reason governing the civilized life in the metropolitan center.”<sup>91</sup>

Moving on to the nature of possessing devices in colonial discourse, one can find that discerning them can either constitute a rather straightforward task or, alternatively, be harder to detect. Usually, they entail the colonial power expressing that the colonized lands and people belong to them. Further, it often occurs that the imperial rhetoric suggests this relationship between the colonizers and colonized to be in some way legitimized.<sup>92</sup> Moving on, a prime example for a more disguised possessive device, which in accordance with Hirvasaho even allows being assigned inferiorizing attributes, thereby making for a mixture of both types of devices, is the device of ‘infantalization’.<sup>93</sup> Depicting the colonized subject as a child and comparing it to the adult-colonizer-self make the distribution of authority and superiority in the relationship in question abundantly clear. In conclusion, the just discussed colonizing devices can be seen as fitting under the cloak of the superordinate concept of ‘othering’.

### 3. Aleksandr Puškin: Imperialism, colonization, and the Finnish Other

#### 3.1. Imperial consciousness in *Klevetnikam Rossij*

Aleksandr Sergejevič Puškin’s creative contributions to Russian and world literature took place during the peak of the cultural epoch of romanticism. Histories of Russian literature usually refer to this period as the Golden Age (‘zolotoj vek’) of Russian Poetry and to Puškin as its personification. Some constituting features of the Golden Age of Poetry can be of interest to our case. First of all, as suggested by Timo Suni, said era did not only represent the cultivation of the poetic language but also, on the reversed side, an era of social idealism.<sup>94</sup> As regards the Age of Puškin, it is important to note that social idealism here did not necessarily entail the harbouring of democratic and dissident

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<sup>90</sup> Thompson, p. 6.

<sup>91</sup> Hirvasaho, p. 94.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Ibid., pp. 13-14.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Suni, T. (2011). Romantiikan kuohuissa kansalliseen omaleimaisuuteen: 1800-1840. In K. Ekonen and S. Turoma, *Venäläisen kirjallisuuden historia* (pp. 171-252). Helsinki: Gaudeamus Helsinki University Press, p. 198.

ideas but could, quite on the contrary, manifest itself in the expression of autocratic and imperialist thoughts. Further, the typical lyrical me of the Golden Age can to a high degree be seen as linked to its author.<sup>95</sup> This could, in all probability, mean that Puškin's poems were infused with his personal attitudes and view of the world. In the works of the Golden Age, historical facts formed a symbiosis with the power of imagination.<sup>96</sup> Against the background of the Golden Age, it can be argued that the genre and era of romanticism set a certain framework, or even dictate the terms, for the style and content in Puškin's verse. The earlier suggestion about genre functioning as a tropical device can be seen to underscore this assumption.

Now, let us move to the viewing and analysis of Puškin's epic poem *Klevetnikam Rossij*<sup>97</sup> (*To the Calumniators of Russia*<sup>98</sup>). Even though it only includes one short reference to Finland as Russia's colonial subject, the poem has been singled out for the present paper due to a particularly vigorous expression of nationalist and imperialist ideas. In this effect, already at the very beginning of the poem Puškin proves that literature constituted a stage on which the nationalist and imperialist discourses were led in 1800s Russia. In addition, as demonstrated throughout the whole poem, literature can be seen to have functioned as a channel for both intra-national and intercultural communication. The title and the first stanzas clearly suggest Puškin communicating to what he describes as the 'calumniators of Russia' ('klevetniki Rossij'):

#### Клеветникам России

О чем шумите вы, народные витии?  
Зачем анафемой грозите вы России?  
Что возмутило вас? волнения Литвы?  
Оставьте: это спор славян между собою,  
Домашний, старый спор, уж взвешенный судьбою,  
Вопрос, которого не разрешите вы.

Уже давно между собою  
Враждуют эти племена;  
Не раз клонилась под грозою  
То их, то наша сторона.  
Кто устоит в неравном споре:  
Кичливый лях, иль верный росс? (...)

#### To the Calumniators of Russia<sup>99</sup>

What mean these angry cries, haranguers of the mob?  
And wherefore hurl your curses at poor Russia's head?  
And what has stirred your rage? Our Lietva's discontent?  
Your wrangling cease, and let the Slavs arrange their feud:  
It is an old domestic strife, the legacy  
Of ages past, a quarrel you can ne'er decide.

Already long among themselves  
These tribes have fought and weaved intrigues;  
And more than once, as fate has willed,  
We, or they, have bent before the storm.  
But who shall victor end the feud,  
The haughty Pole, or Russian true? (...)

<sup>95</sup> Cf. Suni, p. 198.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> The following passages of *Klevetnikam Rossij* (Russian) are all taken from: Puškin, A. S. (2003). *Klevetnikam Rossij*. Retrieved 2017-05-17 from <http://ilibrary.ru/text/744/p.1/index.html>

<sup>98</sup> The following passages of *To the Calumniators of Russia* (English) are all taken from: Puškin, A. S. (2012). *To the calumniators of Russia*. (Trans. Charles Edward Turner & George Borrow). *The works of Alexander Pushkin* [eBook]. Delphi Classics. Available at <https://itunes.apple.com/se/book/the-works-of-alexander-pushkin/id584913342?l=en&mt=11> [accessed 2017-05-21].

<sup>99</sup> The layout of the English translation has been slightly modified by the author of this paper.

Judging by these lines, Puškin's poem clearly is a reaction on something. Here, the context is given by the November Uprising (1830-31), during which Poles and Lithuanians as citizens of the Kingdom of Poland ('Zarstvo Pol'skoje')<sup>100</sup> revolted against the Russian Empire. As a reason for the uprising served the official Russification policies imposed on the Kingdom of Poland.<sup>101</sup> In other words, the colonial subject of Poland rebelled against the Tsarist metropolitan centre. It ended with the suppression of the uprising by Russian imperial forces, which in turn evoked sympathy from other European powers. "Зачем анафемой грозите вы России?" Puškin asks. And further: "Что возмутило вас? волнения Литвы"<sup>102</sup> Particularly French freethinkers (e.g. Marquis de Lafayette) condemned Russia for its actions against the Poles and Lithuanians, which served as a motive for Puškin's poetic counterattack.<sup>103</sup>

In regard of the theoretical framework for this study, Puškin can be seen attempting to mobilize the nation that he associates himself with, Russia, against external threats. In order to mobilize that nation, however, Puškin first needs to imagine it. He does that by applying methods of exclusion and 'othering'. At first, Puškin imagines a community that is based on common Slavic ancestry, including both Russians and Poles ("это спор славян между собою"), with the intention to exclude the Europeans from taking part in the given discourse ("Вопрос, которого не разрешите вы"). What is more, Puškin even seems to advocate ethnic Russian supremacy among the Slavic 'tribes' ("племена") by categorizing the Poles as an inter-imperial Other. In this matter, Puškin operates with the device of direct comparison of the own community to the Other, and additionally, the use of negative epithets: He compares the "haughty Pole" ("Кичливый лях") to the "faithful Ross"<sup>104</sup> ("верный россиянин").<sup>105</sup> In conclusion to the Polish Other, one can suggest that Russian dominance is farther highlighted by Puškin's use of a certain possessing device. He describes the quarrel with Poland as an "old domestic strife" ("Домашний, старый спор") and, what is more, even refers to it as 'already weighed by fate'<sup>106</sup> ("уж взвешенный судьбою") – this way further legitimizing the colonization of the Polish and Lithuanian communities by the Russian Empire.

<sup>100</sup> Another designation for the Kingdom of Poland would be 'Congress Poland'.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Suni, p. 203.

<sup>102</sup> 'Litva' ('Литва') is the Russian term for 'Lithuania'. At that time, the Kingdom of Poland consisted of both ethnic Poles and Lithuanians. Hence Puškin's use of the word 'Litva'.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Wachtel, M. (2012). *A Commentary to Pushkin's Lyric Poetry, 1826–1836*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, p. 227. ; See also: Mirskij, D. (1958). *A history of Russian literature from its beginnings to 1900* (Vintage books ed., Vintage Russian library, 720). New York: Vintage. ; See also: Suni, p. 203.

<sup>104</sup> Meaning 'Russ' or 'Russian' (TT).

<sup>105</sup> Can also be translated as 'true' (TT).

<sup>106</sup> Own translation (TT). As regards the marked text passage, the present paper deems the English translation ("the legacy / Of ages past [...]") by Turner and Borrow as slightly misleading.

What, then, characterizes the European Others? And what lies at the core of Russian pre-eminence?

The third and fourth stanza of *Klevetnikam Rossij* gives answer to these questions:

Оставьте нас: вы не читали  
Сии кровавые скрижали;  
Вам непонятна, вам чужда  
Сия семейная вражда;  
Для вас безмолвны Кремль и Прага;  
Бессмысленно прельщает вас  
Борьбы отчаянной отвага –  
И ненавидите вы нас...

За что ж? ответствуйте: за то ли,  
Что на развалинах пылающей Москвы  
Мы не признали наглой воли  
Того, под кем дрожали вы?  
За то ль, что в бездну повалили  
Мы тяготеющий над царствами кумир  
И нашей кровью искупили  
Европы вольность, честь и мир?..

Leave us in peace! You have not read  
These sacred oracles of blood;  
This fierce, domestic quarrel-feud  
Seems to you both strange and senseless!  
Kremlin, Praga, mean naught to you!  
You mock and scorn as childish whim  
The combat fierce we wage for life;  
And more.... 'tis nothing new....you hate us!

But why this hate? Na}r, [sic!] answer, why?  
Is it because, when burning Moscow's ruins flamed,  
We would not own his brutal rule,  
Before whose nod you, humbled, crouched?  
Because we rose and dashed to ground  
The idol that so long had weighed the empires down,  
And boldly with our blood redeemed  
Lost Europe's honour, freedom, peace?

During the course of the stanzas above, Puškin defines Europe as the contrasting image of Russia by using the former French emperor Napoleon as a reference point.<sup>107</sup> Curiously enough, Puškin does not refer to Napoleon by name but only by allusion. Europe is depicted as having surrendered its will to Napoleon, whereas Russia fought valiantly and “dashed to ground / The idol that so long had weighed the empires down” (“в бездну повалили / Мы тяготеющий над царствами кумир”). Russia, here, is clearly presented in favourable light as the saviour of Europe. Further, in stark contrast to Russia, Europe is ascribed a hateful (“И ненавидите вы нас...”) and quarrelsome character. What is more, the defeating of Napoleon allows being utilized as a historical experience that binds together Russia, i.e. as a factor that contributes to the imagining of a limited community – the Russian imperial nation.

The fifth and final stanza of Puškin's patriotic poem functions as a paragon of a formulation of imperial consciousness. It also includes a warning directed at those, who dare to defy and slander Russia:

Вы грозны на словах — попробуйте на деле!  
Иль старый богатырь, покойный на постеле,  
Не в силах завинтить свой измайльский штык?  
Иль русского царя уже бессильно слово?  
Иль нам с Европой спорить ново?  
Иль русский от побед отвык?  
Иль мало нас? Или от Перми до Тавриды,  
От финских хладных скал до пламенной Колхиды,  
От потрясенного Кремля  
До стен недвижимого Китая,  
Стальной щетиною сверкая,

Your threats are loud; now, try and prove as loud in deed!  
Think ye, the aged hero, sleeping in his bed,  
No more has the strength to wield the sword of Ismail?  
Or that the word of Russian Tsar has weaker grown?  
Or have we ne'er with Europe warred,  
And lost the victor's cunning skill?  
Or are we few? From shores of Perm to southern Tauris,  
From Finnish cliffs of ice to fiery Colchis,  
From Kremlin's battered battlements  
As far as China's circling wall,  
Not one shall fail his country's call!

<sup>107</sup> Cf. Wachtel, p. 227.

Не встанет русская земля?..  
Так высылайте ж к нам, витии,  
Своих озлобленных сынов:  
Есть место им в полях России,  
Среди нечуждых им гробов.

Then send, assemblies of the West,  
Your fiercest troops in full array!  
In Russian plains we'll find them place  
To sleep with those who fell before!

Apart from the flamboyant tone, Russia's national poet additionally implements specific Russian national and cultural symbols into the text. First of all, the mentioning of the Tsar points to the specific Russian imperial context ("Иль русского царя уже бессильно слово?"). Further, by referring to a "bogatyр"<sup>108</sup>, Puškin makes a direct reference to a mythical knight-figure commonly associated with Russian and Slavic folklore. Thereby Puškin addresses the specific Russian and Slavic cultural code – a clear act of utilizing cultural symbols for the purpose of nation building. In connection to this, Puškin seems to imply that, if the need were to arise, even an old bogatyр' would defend Russia and see Europe defeated.

Moving on, the Puškin's fascination for the own empire is evident. This fascination he demonstrates by visualizing the vastness of the Russian Empire and adding to it a militant tone: "From Finnish cliffs of ice to (...) China's circling wall" ("От финских хладных скал до (...) стен недвижимого Китая") Russia will rise to defeat any invading enemy. What is more, Puškin, comparing the rest of Europe to Russia, seems to perceive Russia as the superior nation even in historical terms. Puškin communicates to the reader that Russia already once has defeated a European army and will do so again if attacked – a clear warning to the European 'calumniators', conveyed in form of poetry.

What concerns the type of nationalism that *Klevetnikam Rossij* represents, this paper suggests it being a mixture of both the defensive and aggressive kind. It is defensive, since the slandering and criticizing of Russia can be perceived as an attack on Russian national sovereignty, and it is aggressive, on the other side, for the reason of Puškin claiming the territory of Poland to be Russian and, further, for depicting the Poles as inferior to ethnic Russians. As to the specific features of Russian cultural history discussed earlier in the chapter of analytical considerations, both the fascination for empire and the perception of being surrounded by enemies constitute quintessential components of Aleksandr Puškin's *Klevetnikam Rossij*.

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<sup>108</sup> The English translation has translated the term as "hero," which can be seen as further proof for the poems exclusive 'Russianness'.



### 3.1. *Mednyj vsadnik*: Imperialism and the Finnish Other

The long poem ('poema') *Mednyj vsadnik*<sup>109</sup> (*The Bronze Horseman*<sup>110</sup>), written in 1833 and published posthumously in 1841, is regarded by many as one of Aleksandr Puškin's creative careers most brilliant works, if not even as the most outstanding.<sup>111</sup> Besides from that, the long poem constitutes an exceptionally fruitful object for the study of Puškin's fascination for empire and thus, for a prime example of colonial discourse in Russian literature. In this effect, this essay directs its attention solely on the Prologue ('Vstuplenie') of the long poem. Here, the reader gets acquainted with the fantastic figure of the 'mednyj vsadnik' – the bronze horseman that is Pjotr Velikij (Peter the Great), the 'Westernizer' Russian Tsar, and builder of the new imperial capital – St. Petersburg.

In connection to the earlier remarks on the epoch of romanticism and the role of genre in the colonization process, let it be noted that the Prologue distorts historical facts with the help of Puškin's imagination.<sup>112</sup> The long poem starts with a flashback of Peter the Great (1672-1725) standing either at the Neva banks or the Gulf of Finland.<sup>113</sup> He is looking west towards Sweden and envisions the creation of St. Petersburg:

На берегу пустынных волн  
Стоял он, дум великих полн,  
И вдаль глядел. Пред ним широко  
Река неслася; бедный чёлн  
По ней стремился одиноко.  
По мшистым, топким берегам  
Чернели избы здесь и там,  
Приют убогого чухонца;  
И лес, неведомый лучам  
В тумане спрятанного солнца,  
Кругом шумел.

A wave-swept shore, remote, forlorn:  
Here stood *he*, rapt in thought and drawn  
To distant prospects. Broad and chartless  
The river ran, along it borne  
A lonely skiff, rough-hewn and artless.  
Darker against the marshy green  
Of moss-grown banks appeared some mean  
Log huts: the poor Finns' habitation;  
And forests which had never seen  
The mist-veiled sun's illumination  
Were live with whispers.

И думал он:  
Отсель грозить мы будем шведу,  
Здесь будет город заложен  
На зло надменному соседу.  
Природой здесь нам суждено  
В Европу прорубить окно,  
Ногою твердой стать при море.  
Сюда по новым им волнам  
Все флаги в гости будут к нам,  
И запируем на просторе.

And he thought:  
'From here the Swede is ill-protected:  
A city on this site, to thwart  
His purposes, shall be erected.  
For here we may, by Nature blessed,  
Cut through a window to the West  
And guard our seaboard with conviction.  
At home in waters which had been  
Unknown, all flags shall here be seen,  
And we shall feast without restriction.'

<sup>109</sup> The following passages of *Mednyj vsadnik* (Russian) are all taken from: Puškin, A. S. (2002). *Mednyj vsadnik : Peterburgskaja povest'*. Retrieved 2017-05-17 from <http://ilibrary.ru/text/451/p.1/index.html>

<sup>110</sup> The following passages of *The bronze horseman* (English) are all taken from: Puškin, A. S. (2011). The bronze horseman : A St Petersburg story. (Trans. John Dewey). *Translation and Literature*, 7(1), 59-71. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.3366/tal.1998.7.1.59>

<sup>111</sup> Cf. Mirskij, p. 97.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. Khan, A. (1998). *Pushkin's The bronze horseman* (Critical studies in Russian literature). Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, p. 40.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. Khan., p. 38.

This essay suggests viewing the above two introductory stanzas of *Mednyj vsadnik* as a textbook example of the presence of several recurring and constituting features of Russian cultural history as viewed earlier in the analytical considerations. To begin with, the focus will lie on the second stanza. Firstly, the concept of Russia standing in contrasted juxtaposition to Europe is present with reference to Sweden. This, as we know, stems from actual historical occurrences in form of the numerous wars fought between the two great-powers, and has resulted in Sweden representing a historical Other from Russian perspective. In the Prologue, Puškin broaches the issue of this historical enmity by letting Peter the Great think that the shores of the Gulf of Finland would make for a good location from where to frighten the ‘Swede’. Here, the English translation of the Swede being “ill-protected” is slightly inaccurate. The Russian original (“грозить мы будем шведу”) clearly marks the intention of Peter to ‘threaten’ (’грозить’) Sweden. The target-oriented gaze of Peter I is further highlighted by his intention to “[c]ut through a window to the West (“В Европу прорубить окно”). Here, I want to emphasize that the Russian original specifically refers to a window to Europe and not the West. Europe constituted the cultural counterpart to Russia in Puškin’s and, further, Dostojevskij’s time, not the West. In addition, Peter is portrayed to “be drawn [t]o distant prospects” (“вдаль глядел”<sup>114</sup>), which this essay examines to be a metaphorical allusion for the Tsar’s omnipotence and, further, his expansive and, thereby, imperialistic vision and desire. What concerns the figure of Tsar Peter, this essay suggests it being viewed as a personification of the Russian Empire seeking expansion to the West.<sup>115</sup>

Secondly, similar to the case in *Klevetnikam Rossij*, the Russian perception of having enemies close by to its borders, here with reference to Sweden, is strongly present in the long poem. Peter describes the neighbouring region as a good location from where to defy the enemy nation, as a result of which he voices his perceived legitimate claim over the region in question. What is more, the expansion of the Russian Empire onto the lands of the future city of St. Petersburg and the notion of owning them is conveyed as being destined by nature: “Природой здесь нам суждено / В Европу прорубить окно.” Here, Puškin anew employs a colonizing device, and to be more specific, a device indicating possession.

Moving on to the second big issue of this essay, the depiction of Finland and the Finns in the works of Puškin, I want to point to the first stanza of *Mednyj vsadnik*. Before reaching the Swedish Other,

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<sup>114</sup> Puškin here uses the verb ‘gljadet’ (’глядеть’), which can be translated as ‘look’, ‘gaze’ – meaning that Peter is portrayed both physically and figuratively looking ‘afar’ (’vdal’; ‘вдаль’).

<sup>115</sup> See also: Thompson, p. 78.

Peter's imperialistic gaze at first lingers on "moss-grown banks" ("По мшистым, топким берегам") where he is able to discern a scattered accumulation of "some mean log huts" ("избы здесь и там"). These huts are home to another community: the Finns. First of all, this essay wants to turn the attention to the designation Puškin uses whilst referring to this community that, as was the case under the rule of Peter the Great, were foreigners to the Russian Empire. I, here, have in mind Puškin's peculiar reference to the 'čuchonets' ("чухонец"<sup>116</sup>). In the English translation, the full lexical semantics of said term are lost, which leaves the reader of Russian literature abroad only with fractional knowledge of what the term can signify. In order to search for the full implication and the nuances of the term 'čuchonets', this paper suggests following Hirvasaho's example and start its search with looking up the entry in Vladimir Dal's *Tolkovyj slovar' živogo velikorusskogo jazyka* (*The Explanatory Dictionary of the Living Great Russian Language*)<sup>117</sup>, published in 1863-1866. The renowned lexicographer, imperial official, and close friend to Puškin,<sup>118</sup> defines the term as follows: "чухонец, –нка, петерб. прозвание пригородныхъ финовъ (...)." <sup>119</sup> The term 'прозвание' (later 'прозвание') is an example of the Old Russian spelling and has since Dal's time vanished from use. The modern day equivalent of 'прозвание' in Russian is the word 'прозвище' and is translated into English as 'sobriquet' or 'nickname'. As a result, I have translated the dictionary entry as follows: 'Čuchonets, –nka, a St. Petersburg nickname for suburban Finns.'

Even though 'čuchonets' has vanished from general language usage in Russia,<sup>120</sup> it constituted a common word in the 1800s. The term was particularly closely related with St. Petersburg, as Vladimir Dal's dictionary entry already indicates. Actually, the best proof for this assumption is just said nomination in Dal's dictionary. Following Kristin Vitalich's reflections on Dal's dictionary, the importance and weight of dictionaries "comes from their symbolic significance as proof (...)." <sup>121</sup> Furthermore, Vitalich considers the function of dictionaries in line with the process of nation building – a central theme of this essay. Referring to the exegesis of Pierre Bourdieu on the subject, Vitalich quotes Bourdieu remarking that

<sup>116</sup> I here refer to the term in its nominative form (ТТ).

<sup>117</sup> Dal, V. I. (2007). *The explanatory dictionary of the living Great Russian language: In 4 Volumes*. Moscow: "Ripol-Classik".

<sup>118</sup> Cf. Ètkind, pp. 161-64.

<sup>119</sup> Dal', V. (1981). čuchonets". *Tolkovyj slovar' živogo velikorusskogo jazyka : V četyrech tomach* (8. izd. ed.). Tom 4. Moskva. ; See also: Hirvasaho, p. 138.

<sup>120</sup> Cf. Nyberg, p. 86.

<sup>121</sup> Vitalich, K. (2007). Dictionary as Empire: Vladimir Dal's Interpretive Dictionary of the Living Great Russian Language. *Ab Imperio*, 2007(2), 153-178. Retrieved 2017-04-19 from <https://muse-jhu-edu.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/article/561082/pdf>, p. 155.

“only when the making of the ‘nation’... creates new uses and functions does it become indispensable to forge a standard language... [...] The dictionary is the exemplary result of this labor of codification and normalization.”<sup>122</sup>

In connection to Bourdieu’s and Vitalich’ views on the function of dictionaries, one might suggest that by normalizing the term and concept of ‘čuchonets’, Vladimir Dal’, to a certain extent, binds Finland and the Finns to the Russian Empire. At least, one can assume that the codification of ‘čuchonets’ constitutes an example of mapping. Keeping in mind the multi-ethnic composition of the Russian Empire, Dal’ simply might have had the intention to map the various ethnicities and social groups that formed the Russian Empire.

Let us now ponder on other possible implications of the signified, i.e. the concept of a ‘čuchonets’. The aforementioned connection of the term to St. Petersburg is further highlighted by the entry in the *Slovar’ jazyka Puškina* (*The Dictionary of the Language of Puškin*)<sup>123</sup>, which points out that Puškin himself jokingly used the term ‘Čuchljandija’ (‘Чухляндия’) in reference to the outskirts of St. Petersburg.<sup>124</sup> This implies a certain condescending attitude towards the community in question. Further information to the semantics and usage of ‘čuchonets’ is found in the *Tolkovyj slovar’ russkogo jazyka* (*The Interpretive Dictionary of the Russian Language*)<sup>125</sup> compiled by Ožegov and Švedova, and it is here that it gets interesting. Applying a broader but also differing definition in comparison to the one of Dal’, Ožegov and Švedova mark the term ‘čuchontsy’ (‘чухонцы’ – plural form) as a former denomination for Estonians and, further, the Karelo-Finnish population residing in the surroundings of St. Petersburg.<sup>126</sup>

Moving on to the logical semantics of the term ‘čuchonets’, Hirvasaho states that “in actual usage, the term came to be extended to Finnish-speaking inhabitants of Finland and acquired a pejorative meaning.”<sup>127</sup> In conclusion, the term ‘čuchonets’ could, thus, refer to Finns, St. Petersburg Finns, Karelo-Finns, Estonians, and keeping in mind Puškin’s imagined ‘Čuchljandija’, possibly even ethnic Russians dwelling in the surroundings of St. Petersburg. It acquiring a pejorative connotation clearly indicates a practice of ‘othering’. And by virtue of this ‘othering’ not only being directed at

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<sup>122</sup> Bourdieu, P. (2001). *Language and symbolic power*. (Trans. John B. Thompson). Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 48. Quoted from: Vitalich, p. 155.

<sup>123</sup> Own translation (TT).

<sup>124</sup> Bernštejn, S., & Vinogradov, V. (1956). Čuchljandija. *Slovar’ jazyka Puškina : V četyrech tomach*. Tom 4. Moskva: Gos. izd. inostrannyh i nacional’nych slovaroj.

<sup>125</sup> Own translation (TT).

<sup>126</sup> Cf. Ožegov, S., & Švedova, N. (1993). čuchontsy. *Tolkovyj slovar’ russkogo jazyka : Okolo 72500 slov i 7500 frazeologičeskich vyražeenij* (2. zavod. ed.) Moskva: AZ.

<sup>127</sup> Hirvasaho, p. 138.

external Others but first and foremost at ethnicities and social groups within to the Russian Empire, this essay suggests the usage of the term ‘čuchonets’ being a prime indicator for the practice of internal colonization, as examined by Aleksandr Ėtkind. The same can be concluded for the depiction and treatment of the Poles and Lithuanians in Puškin’s *Klevetnikam Rossij*.

It is not primarily against the background of internal colonization, though, that Puškin’s usage of ‘čuchonets’ in *Mednyj vsadnik* should be understood but, rather, as device of external colonization. The ‘poor Finn’ (‘ubogij čuchonets’) is here suggested to serve as the depiction of an external Other, against whom, in Puškin’s romantic poem, Peter the Great and the Russian Empire define themselves. The practice of ‘othering’ Puškin executes by using negative epithets in reference to the contrasted community and by means of primitivization, as described by Spurr in *Rhetoric of empire*. One can even conclude that Puškin makes use of negative epithets twice when referring to the Finn. First, the derogatory term ‘čuchonets’ itself constitutes a negative epithet and, secondly, the additional ‘poor’ (‘ubogij’) increases the effect of the act of ‘othering’. What concerns the device of primitivization, Puškin evidently operates with the dichotomy uncivilized/civilized, where the ‘čuchonets’, naturally, is portrayed as the uncivilized counterpart to the civilized Russian Empire: The ‘čuchontsy’, residing in scattered huts along the shore are depicted in stark opposition to the grand city that Peter dreams of replacing them with. Puškin here describes Peter’s expansionist ideas in total agreement with Said’s earlier mentioned general implications of the concept of imperialism as “thinking about, settling on, controlling land that you do not possess, that is distant, that is lived on and owned by others (...).”<sup>128</sup>

In the third stanza of the long poem, the native story of the geographical location, i.e. the Finnish story, has been replaced with settlements of a greater civilization, the imperial capital:

Прошло сто лет, и юный град,  
Полнощных стран краса и диво,  
Из тьмы лесов, из топи блат  
Вознесся пышно, горделиво;  
Где прежде финский рыболов,  
Печальный пасынок природы,  
Один у низких берегов  
Бросал в неведомые воды  
Свой ветхой невод, ныне там  
По оживленным берегам  
Громады стройные теснятся  
Дворцов и башен; (...)

A hundred years have passed. We see,  
Where swamp and forest stood but lately:  
The city, northern prodigy,  
Has risen, sumptuous and stately;  
Where once a humble Finnish lad –  
Poor foster-child in Nature’s keeping –  
Alone upon the low banks had  
Oft cast his time-worn nets when reaping  
The waters’ hidden harvest, –now  
Great towers and palaces endow  
The bustling banks with grace and splendour;  
(...)

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<sup>128</sup> See: earlier, p. 7.

The civilizing process of both the natural environs and their native inhabitants, the Finns, can be seen to continue by Puškin's description of the "city" or as the Russian original signifies it – the 'young city' ("юный град") now standing in the stead of where "swamp and forest stood but lately" ("Из тьмы лесов, из топи блат"). Puškin further emphasizes this process of turning backwardness and nature into culture and civilization by juxtaposing the natives with the colonizers. Where the Finnish fisherman once stood alone, there now is people and life. In this regard, Hirvasaho suggests that in the long poem "activity and life comes to Finland from Russia."<sup>129</sup> Thus, Puškin composed a textbook example for the practice of aggressive nationalism, as defined by Thompson, which includes the acquisition of land that belongs to Others and the aspiration to export Russian identity to these lands. Further, the elbowing out of the native story is here depicted to have happened at the expense of pursuing the greater good: The city envisioned by Peter is described as the "northern prodigy" ("юный град, / Полнощных стран краса и диво"). In comparison to the English translation, the Russian original imagines St. Petersburg as a capital that all the northern nations can be proud of, even the subjugated Finns. Following the path set in *Klevetnikam Rossij*, the pre-eminence of the citizens of the metropolitan centre over the natives of the periphery is presumed. Or as Thompson aptly puts it: "As Edward Said might say, this is imperialism at it's purest: Peter's right to destroy the Finnish way of life is taken for granted."<sup>130</sup> Furthermore, by virtue of the long poem depicting the implanting of settlements on foreign and distant territory, in this case, the native surroundings of the Finnish fisherman, the third stanza of *Mednyj vsadnik* also allows being aligned with Said's definition of colonialism. In addition, one can even point to a presence of Russian colonial consciousness in the poem. This consciousness of having colonized the land of an Other emanates from the last two lines of the outtake above concerning the net of the Finnish fisherman: "Свой ветхой невод, ныне там / По оживленным берегам (...)." In the face of Peter's grand scheme of building a civilization for 'all northern nations', no remorse concerning the incorporation of the Finns into the Russian Empire needs to be shown.

Noteworthy in the third stanza is also Puškin's depiction of the Finn, which in accordance to Nyberg can be viewed as a literary manifestation of a Finland standing apart from the rest of the empire.<sup>131</sup> Thus, parts of the Prologue to *Mednyj vsadnik* allow being interpreted as Puškin's commentary on historical realities. In this case, the historical framework is given with the Finnish-Russian relations. Puškin, where earlier in the poem referring to the 'čuchontsy', which, as

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<sup>129</sup> Hirvasaho, p. 89.

<sup>130</sup> Thompson, p. 78.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. Nyberg, p. 85.

discussed, apart from Finns also can allude to other communities, here specifically refers to a 'Finnish fisherman'. Here the English translation by John Dewey does not entail the word-for-word translation of 'rybolov' ('рыболов') to 'fisherman' – Dewey has translated it simply as 'lad'. Puškin writes: "Где прежде финский рыболлов, / Печальный пасынок природы, / Один у низких берегов (...)." These three lines serve as a stage for a multitude of colonizing devices and devices of nationalism. To begin with, I want to pick up the earlier mentioned reflections by Hirvasaho about literary descriptions having the potential of advancing to become political symbols. In *Mednyj vsadnik*, "the image of the Finn as a fisherman eliminates him as a contender for a space invaded by the Russians (...)." <sup>132</sup> In line with this, the ulterior motive seems to be that the fisherman functions as the personification of a calm Other, who does not emanate any danger what so ever to the expansive intentions of Peter the Great. <sup>133</sup> Further, Puškin's mentioning of only one type of native Finnish inhabitant, the fisherman, can be viewed as an act of trivializing the Finnish national character. Against this simple nation of fishermen, Puškin places the contrasted image of the civilized empire, thus further neutralizing the colonial subject. Following up on Hirvasaho's considerations on the genre of romanticism, one can conclude that the depicted primitivism of the colonized peoples does indeed underline the order governing the civilized in the metropolitan core.

Picking up on the process of disarming the contender again, said process can further be seen to continue with the description of the Finn as the "[p]oor foster-child in Nature's keeping" <sup>134</sup> ("Печальный пасынок природы"), who due to his juvenile, or with the device of infantilization in mind, infantile being, cannot offer any resistance to the Russian conquerors. <sup>135</sup> In addition, by attributing the stepson with the term 'sad', Puškin again operates with the usage of negative epithets in order to undermine the Finnish Other. What is more, depicting this foster-child as standing "alone" at the low shores further highlights his neutralization as a worthy opponent of the empire. Also, against the historical background of Finland being referred to as an anomaly in the Russian Empire, the logical semantics of the term stepson/foster-child grant interpreting it in terms of separation and isolation. In connection with this, the designation of the Finnish fisherman as nature's sad stepson functions as a prime example of a coalition of inferiorizing and possessing devices. Peter the Great, and thus the Russian Empire, can be seen as a parental figure of the Finnish stepchild. As a consequence of this, Peter is legitimized to exercise authority over the

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<sup>132</sup> Hirvasaho, p. 92.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. Ibid., pp. 90-91.

<sup>134</sup> The term 'pasynok' ('пасынок') is usually translated as 'stepson' or 'stepchild'.

<sup>135</sup> Cf. Hirvasaho, p. 91.

Finnish stepchild. When converted into the factual historical domain of Finnish-Russian relations, this allegorical representation would mean that the colonization of Finland by the Russian Empire could be deemed legitimate.

The fifth stanza of the long poem signifies Puškin's attraction to the city of Saint Petersburg and, very much as earlier in *Klevetnikam Rossij*, his fascination for empire:

Красуйся, град Петров, и стой  
Неколебимо как Россия,  
Да умирится же с тобой  
И побежденная стихия;  
Вражду и плен старинный свой  
Пусть волны финские забудут  
И тщетной злобою не будут  
Тревожить вечный сон Петра!

O fair Petropolis, stand fast,  
Unshakeable as this great nation:  
So that the elements, at last  
Subdued, may seek conciliation!  
And may the Finnish waves now cast  
Aside hate born of long subjection,  
And not with futile insurrection  
Disturb great Peter's ageless sleep!

Here, Puškin evokes the greatness and splendour of both the Russian nation and its worthy capital, the city of Peter. Further, the stability and persistence of the Petropolis is highlighted: “Красуйся, град Петров, и стой / Неколебимо как Россия”. At the same time, the immutability of the status quo, i.e. Finland being a colonial subject of Russia, is expressed. It seems, though, as if Puškin in this context, interestingly, acknowledges the subjugation of the Finnish peoples by the Russian Empire. In connection with this, he even describes the emergence and development of a hate of the Finns, a hate, which is directed at the Russian colonizer. In a figure of speech, the poem, at the same time, expresses a hope for conciliation: “Вражду и плен старинный свой / Пусть волны финские забудут”. However, the poem continues with stating that all rebellion against the status quo is useless. The Finnish colonial subjects are requested to cast aside the resentment (‘vražda’) and bondage (‘plen’) of old, or as Dewey has translated it, “cast [a]side hate born of long subjection”, for Russia will not yield and will continue standing “unshakeable”. Again, the hate emanating from the areas surrounding the Russian Empire, or in this case, the hatred of a colonial subject from within the empire directed at the metropolitan centre, composes an issue. As was the case in *Klevetnikam Rossij*, so is the perception of being surrounded by both external and internal enemies also present in the Prologue to *Mednyj vsadnik*. Again, I would like to concur with Ètkind on the matter of that internal colonization constituted a recurring practice within the Russian Empire, at least what *Mednyj vsadnik* and *Klevetnikam Rossij* are concerned.

On the subject of Ètkind's reflections, I would like to add a reference to yet another issue broached by him. As mentioned earlier, Ètkind sees colonization processes always entailing a collaboration of cultural hegemony and political domination. This setting takes a particularly prominent place in the



discussed literary works of Aleksandr Puškin. In *Mednyj vsadnik*, for instance, Puškin distorts historical facts and in doing so finds himself in confrontation with the political course of the Tsars Aleksandr I and Nikolaj I on the subject of Finland. But also, some kind of coalition between the cultural hegemony, that Puškin represents like none other in Russia, and Tsarist politics, is discernible by Puškin alluding to the separateness of the Grand Duchy as a colony of the Russian Empire. But what Puškin first and foremost did, is that he “gave a voice to those who felt invigorated by Russia’s military achievements”<sup>136</sup>, thereby marking a coalition of cultural hegemony with the Russian nationalist movements of that time. In conclusion to the subchapter on Aleksandr Puškin’s *Mednyj vsadnik*, one can state that the long poem is infused with imperial and colonial consciousness, colonization processes – both internal and external – and further, that Puškin used the Finns and/or the ‘čuchontsy’ as contrasted images when imagining the Russian imperial nation.

## **4. Dostojevskij: The Russian nation and the reproduction of the Finnish Other**

### **4.1. Dostojevskij’s admiration of Puškin and the Russian nation**

The reasons for selecting the literary work and persona of Fëdor Michajlovič Dostojevskij (1821-1881) as the other central object of study are manifold. To begin with, one might refer to his status as one of the big names of both Russian and world literature. Secondly, his admiration for the literary work and person of Aleksandr Puškin is well known and Puškin is known to have influenced Dostojevskij. Also, Dostojevskij’s prose is tightly connected to the former imperial capital of St. Petersburg. Regarding the connection of St. Petersburg and literature, especially Dostojevskij’s works, the concept of the ‘peterburgskij tekst’ (St. Petersburg Text) must be mentioned. The ‘peterburgskij tekst’, developed around semiotician Vladimir Toporov, stems from the special status of St. Petersburg in the Russian culture.<sup>137</sup> In the words of Pekka Tammi: “[T]he former capital of imperial Russia should not be regarded just as a politico-historical fact” but “can also be used as a name for an intertextual construct (...).”<sup>138</sup> Dostojevskij’s Petersburg novels can thus be seen in connection to Puškin’s *Mednyj vsadnik*, which next to Dostojevskij’s Petersburg

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<sup>136</sup> Thompson, p. 60.

<sup>137</sup> Cf. Toporov, V. N. (1984). *Peterburg i peterburgskij tekst russkoj literatury*. (Vvedenie v temu). V A. E. Malc (ed.) *Semiotika goroda i gorodskoj kul'tury* (pp. 4-29). Tartu: Tartuskij gosudarstvennyj universitet.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. Tammi, P. (2008). The St. Petersburg text and its Nabokovian texture. *Cycnos*, 10(1). Retrieved 2017-05-13 from <http://revel.unice.fr/cycnos/index.html?id=1311>

novels constitute the core of basic texts of the literary discourse.<sup>139</sup> It can be argued that Dostojevskij's prose in a way communicates with Puškin's verse: It comments on it, alludes to it, reproduces it, and develops it further. In the field of literary studies, this practice is usually referred to as intertextuality. In our case, the relevant intertextual references in Dostojevskij's prose constitute, at first, Dostojevskij's passion for the Russian nation and, second, his negative 'othering' of the Finns and Finland. To begin with, this essay will turn to examining Dostojevskij's admiration of Puškin and, in connection to that, his link to nationalist and imperialist ideas.

In order to examine Dostojevskij's link to Puškin and nationalism, this paper will draw from the collection of Dostojevskij's fictional and non-fictional writings – *Dnevnik pisatelja* (*A Writer's Diary*)<sup>140</sup> and reflections of Dmitrij S. Mirskij, a renowned Russian political and literary historian, on Dostojevskij. Dostojevskij's admiration for Puškin's intellect and genius stems from, among other things, Puškin's broad mind, or in the words of Mirskij and Dostojevskij himself – Puškin's "virtue of 'pan-humanity'"<sup>141</sup> ("способность всемирной отзывчивости")<sup>142</sup>. In other words, Puškin, according to Dostojevskij, had the ability to understand all different peoples and all different civilizations.<sup>143</sup> Especially capable, however, Puškin was at depicting the beauty of the Russian person ('čelovek') and the 'Russian soul' ('rysskaja duša'). According to Dostojevskij, this stems from the circumstance of Puškin not attempting to grasp and depict this beauty by referring to the contemporary Russian civilization or by referring to external European ideas and forms, but by looking for that beauty directly in the spirit of the Russian people, the Russian folk.<sup>144</sup> In other words, Dostojevskij seems to be of the opinion that Puškin has succeeded in imagining the Russian cultural and national identity in a truthful way. In that sense, Dostojevskij can be described as advocating Russianness and the Russian national spirit. As to what methods and style he uses, this paper tries to fathom in the next subchapter. Further in the same context, Dostojevskij's renouncement of European influences in Russia becomes clear. Dostojevskij, in this regard, reports an 'ugliness of the externally acquired European ideas and forms' ('urodlivost' vnešne usvoennyx evropejskich idej i form').<sup>145</sup> As clearly emanates from this perspective on Europe, Dostojevskij

<sup>139</sup> Cf. Tammi.

<sup>140</sup> It comprises of two volumes, whereof the second and final one was published in 1881.

<sup>141</sup> Mirskij, p. 283.

<sup>142</sup> Dostojevskij, F. M. (2010) *Dnevnik pisatelja*. Moskva: Institut ruskoj civilizacij, p. 698.

<sup>143</sup> Cf. Mirskij, p. 283.

<sup>144</sup> Dostojevskij (2010) – *Dnevnik Pisatelja*, p. 698.

<sup>145</sup> Dostojevskij's full quote in Russian goes as follows: "Тут уже надобно говорить всю правду: не в нынешней нашей цивилизации, не в «европейском» так называемом образовании (которого у нас, к слову сказать, никогда и не было), не в уродливостях внешне усвоенных европейских идей и форм указал Пушкин эту красоту, а единственно в народном духе нашел ее, и только в нем." In: Dostojevskij (2010) – *Dnevnik Pisatelja*, p. 698.

further can be examined against the background of a specific recurring phenomenon in Russian cultural history – the constant comparison of Russia to Europe.

Furthermore, according to Dostojevskij's view, the genius of Puškin concerning the artistic depiction of the 'russkaja duša' bases in the constitution and capability of the Russian people themselves. According to his belief, the Russian people probably constitute the most capable nation of all in terms of embracing, or what is more, spreading to the world, the idea of universal unity and fraternal love.<sup>146</sup> Thereby he finds himself in perfect alignment with Månson's reflections about the notion of nation indicating a perceived common destiny and, furthermore, a perceived common mission. In connection with this, Dostojevskij's notions of fraternal love and universal unity can be seen as fitting Anderson's conceptualization of a nation being conceived as a deep horizontal comradeship. Also, Dostojevskij's reflections allow being viewed in accordance with parts of Thompson's definition of aggressive nationalism. Disguised under the idealistic pronouncements of universal unity and fraternal love, there lies a conviction of that the 'Russian way of life' should be installed on lands where Others dwell. With this said, Dostojevskij can be interpreted continuing in the spirit of the Golden Age of Russian Poetry, at least what concerns the notion of social idealism.

In preparation for the analysis of the literary material, this essay wants to put forward one last aspect concerning Dostojevskij's personal views and prose. In stark contrast to his idea of global unity and fraternal love, Dostojevskij was known for his xenophobic tendencies. His ethnic hatred would first and foremost encompass the Jewish communities and the Turks, both of whom Bardan Bardasarjan describes as Dostojevskij's ontological enemies.<sup>147</sup> In addition, Dostojevskij's contempt would also come to extend itself to Poles.<sup>148</sup> Now it is time to see how Dostojevskij related to the Finns and Finland.

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<sup>146</sup> „Я просто только говорю, что русская душа, что гений народа русского, может быть, наиболее способны, из всех народов, вместить в себе идею всечеловеческого единения, братской любви, трезвого взгляда, прощающего враждебное, различающего и извиняющего несходное, снимающего противоречия.” In: Dostojevskij (2010) – *Dnevnik Pisatelja*, p. 699.

<sup>147</sup> Cf. Bardasarjan, B. (2005). *Konspirologičeskij aspekt tvorčestva F. M. Dostojevskogo. Rossija v kraskach*. Retrieved 2017-05-14 from <http://ricolor.org/history/cu/lit/4/pr/>

<sup>148</sup> Cf. Bardasarjan.

## 4.2. The ‘čuchontsy’ and Finland as an imagined Other in Dostojevskij’s prose

In connection with the nationalist ideas expressed by Dostojevskij, this essay suggests that his novels, especially his St. Petersburg prose, contain case-examples of negative ‘othering’ of Finns as acts of imagined identity politics. Also, it is assumed that he reproduces this negative image in reference to Puškin’s *Mednyj vsadnik*. This assumption stems from Dostojevskij’s practice of referring to a certain St. Petersburg social group as ‘čuchontsy’. How, then, are they depicted? And what are the implications of this ‘othering’? These are the main questions that the following aims to answer. At this point, however, let it be noted that neither the ‘čuchontsy’ nor Finland in any form represent constitutive elements of Dostojevskij’s prose. Moreover, they contribute to the ephemeral material of his novels but, nevertheless, function as carriers of subtle nuances that contribute to the overall picture of Dostojevskij’s imagined worlds.

To begin with, I want to address the ‘čuchontsy’-references in Dostojevskij’s canonical *Prestuplenie i nakazanie* (*Crime and Punishment*), which was published 1866. Here, the reader gets acquainted with the streetscape of St. Petersburg on a stifling hot summer day:

”На улице опять жара стояла невыносимая; хоть бы капля дождя во все эти дни. Опять пыль, кирпич и известка, опять вонь из лавочек и распивочных, опять поминутно пьяные, чухонцы-разносчики и полуразвалившиеся извозчики.”<sup>149</sup>

“In the street the heat was insufferable again; not a drop of rain had fallen all those days. Again dust, bricks and mortar, again the stench from the shops and pot-houses, again the drunken men, the Finnish pedlars and half-broken-down cabs.”<sup>150</sup>

In accordance with the facts of Finns emigrating to St. Petersburg following Finland’s incorporation into the Russian Empire, and also, in accordance with the earlier mentioned dictionary entries, the ‘čuchontsy’ formed a St. Petersburg minority. Here, this historical fact finds entrance in Dostojevskij’s prose. But, as clearly emanates from the quote above, the ‘čuchontsy’ pedlars do not contribute to a beautiful streetscape, quite on the contrary, one gets the impression of them being a part of and adding to an unpleasant urban milieu. They keep company with drunkards and “half-broken down cabs”, giving the reader the impression of them being members of the social underclass.

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<sup>149</sup> Dostojevskij, F. M. (2001). *Prestuplenie i nakazanie*. Retrieved 2017-05-17 from <http://ilibrary.ru/text/69/p.1/index.html>

<sup>150</sup> Dostojevskij, F. M. (2006). *Crime and punishment*. (Trans. Constance Garnett). Retrieved 2017-05-14 at <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/2554>

Dostojevskij can be seen to continue with the negative imagining of the ‘čuchontsy’ later on in the novel. What is more, he continues referring to their ‘otherness’ in a more direct fashion. In the following outtake, Dostojevskij describes the verbal dispute of two Petersburg women:

“Но этого уже не могла вытерпеть Катерина Ивановна и немедленно, во всеуслышание, «отчеканила», что у Амалии Ивановны, может, никогда и фатера-то не было, а что просто Амалия Ивановна — петербургская пьяная чухонка и, наверно, где-нибудь прежде в кухарках жила, а пожалуй, и того хуже. Амалия Ивановна покраснела как рак и завизжала, что это, может быть, у Катерины Ивановны «совсем фатер не буль; а что у ней буль фатер аус Берлин, и таки длинны сюртук носиль, и всё делаль: пуф, пуф, пуф!»

Катерина Ивановна с презрением заметила, что ее происхождение всем известно и что в этом самом похвальном листе обозначено печатными буквами, что отец ее полковник; а что отец Амалии Ивановны (если только у ней был какой-нибудь отец), наверно, какой-нибудь петербургский чухонец, молоко продавал; а вернее всего, что и совсем отца не было, потому что еще до сих пор неизвестно, как зовут Амалию Ивановну по батюшке: Ивановна или Людвиговна?»<sup>151</sup>

”But this was too much for Katerina Ivanovna, and she at once declared, so that all could hear, that Amalia Ivanovna probably never had a father, but was simply a drunken Petersburg Finn, and had certainly once been a cook and probably something worse. Amalia Ivanovna turned as red as a lobster and squealed that perhaps Katerina Ivanovna never had a father, ‘but she had a *Vater aus Berlin* and that he wore a long coat and always said poof-poof-poof!’

Katerina Ivanovna observed contemptuously that all knew what her family was and that on that very certificate of honour it was stated in print that her father was a colonel, while Amalia Ivanovna’s father—if she really had one—was probably some Finnish milkman, but that probably she never had a father at all, since it was still uncertain whether her name was Amalia Ivanovna or Amalia Ludwigovna.”<sup>152</sup>

And it is here, clearly, that the term ‘čuchonets’ gets assigned a pejorative function. Being labelled as being a “drunken Petersburg Finn” (“петербургская пьяная чухонка”) hurts Amalia Ivanovna, which indicates a derogative nature of the term. In this scenario, this negative labelling of Amalia Ivanovna’s personal background is further enhanced by the negative epithet ‘drunken’. Also, the assumption of the Petersburg ‘čuchontsy’ holding lower social status than, for instance, the Russians depicted in the contexts above, seems to increase in validity. This stems, for the most part, from the professions Dostojevskij has equipped the ‘čuchontsy’ with. The first quotation presents them as pedlars, whereas in the second Katarina Ivanovna refers to Amalia’s father as probably having been “simply some Finnish milkman” (“какой-нибудь петербургский чухонец, молоко продавал”). The direct contrasted juxtaposition of Amalia Ivanovna’s alleged ‘čuchonets’-milkman-father with the Russian colonel father of Katerina Ivanovna further emphasizes the underclass status of the minority group. In my estimation, this allows interpreting the scenario as a comparison of a representative of the metropolitan centre with an individual of an unsavoury minority group. The citizen of the metropolitan centre being a colonel, i.e. a representative of the Imperial Russian Army (‘*Russkaja imperatorskaja armija*’), further illustrates the asymmetrical distribution of power in this intercultural encounter. What is more, the condescending tone in

<sup>151</sup> Dostojevskij (2001) – *Prestuplenie i nakazanie*.

<sup>152</sup> Dostojevskij, F. M. (2006) – *Crime and punishment*.

allusion to the community of the 'čuchontsy' becomes evident with the attribute "simply some" ("какой-нибудь") preceding "Finnish milkman".

With the discussion above in mind, one can suggest that the practice of 'othering' the 'čuchontsy' in Dostojevskij's *Prestuplenie i nakazanie* served the purpose of marking a St. Petersburg specific social division. Dostjevskij, by depicting the 'čuchontsy' in an unfavourable light, broaches the issue of majority-minority relations. Furthermore, in adherence to Kramsch' reflections on culture as a discourse-analytical conception, the 'čuchontsy' are clearly excluded from the discourse of fully-fledged members of the Petersburg society.

As was the case with Puškin's *Mednyj vsadnik*, so has the notion of an apart Finland also left its mark in Dostojevskij's depiction of the Finns. Next to the demarcation between the Petersburg 'čuchontsy' and 'regular' citizens of the empire, Finland's separateness, somewhat mysteriously, manifests itself in the depiction of Finnish women as child-killers. The first of the following quotes comes from Dostojevskij's monumental *Bratja Karamazovy* (*The Brothers Karamazov*), published in 1879-1880, whereas the second stems from the short story *Mal'čik y Christa na elke* (*The Heavenly Christmas tree*), written in 1876:

"Недавно в Финляндии одна девица, служанка, была заподозрена, что она тайно родила ребенка. Стали следить за нею и на чердаке дома, в углу за кирпичами, нашли ее сундук, про который никто не знал, его отперли и вынули из него трупик новорожденного и убитого ею младенца. В том же сундуке нашли два скелета уже рожденных прежде ею младенцев и ею же убитых в минуту рождения, в чем она и повинилась."<sup>153</sup>

"Not long ago a servant girl in Finland was suspected of having secretly given birth to a child. She was watched, and a box of which no one knew anything was found in the corner of the loft, behind some bricks. It was opened and inside was found the body of a new-born child which she had killed. In the same box were found the skeletons of two other babies which, according to her own confession, she had killed at the moment of their birth."<sup>154</sup>

" – И узнал он, что мальчики эти и девочки все были всё такие же, как он, дети, но одни замерзли еще в своих корзинах, в которых их подкинули на лестницы к дверям петербургских чиновников, другие задохлись у чухонки, от воспитательного дома на прокормлении, третьи умерли у иссохшей груди своих матерей (во время самарского голода), четвертые задохлись в вагонах третьего класса от смраду, (...)." <sup>155</sup>

"And he found out that all these little boys and girls were children just like himself; that some had been frozen in the baskets in which they had as babies been laid on the doorsteps of well-to-do Petersburg people, others had been boarded out with Finnish women by the Foundling and had been suffocated, others had died at their starved mother's breasts (in the Samara famine), others had died in the third-class railway carriages from the foul air; (...)." <sup>156</sup>

<sup>153</sup> Dostojevskij, F. M. (2005). *Bratja Karamazovy*. Retrieved 2017-05-17 from <http://ilibrary.ru/text/1199/index.html>

<sup>154</sup> Dostojevskij, F. M. (2009). *The Brothers Karamazov*. (Trans. Constance Garnett). Retrieved 2017-05-14 from <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/28054>

<sup>155</sup> Dostojevskij (2010) – *Dnevnik pisatelja*, p. 236.

<sup>156</sup> Dostojevskij, F. M. (2016). *The heavenly Christmas tree*. Retrieved 2017-05-14 from <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/d/dostoyevsky/heavenly-christmas-tree/>

The first quote imagines a hostile Finland and can be viewed as a further literary manifestation of Finland's separateness from the Russian Empire. Here, Dostojevskij notably describes a "girl in Finland" ("в Финляндий одна девица"), thus deviating from the prevalent usage of the 'čuchontsy'-denomination, who has not only killed her new-born child but several more before that. The second quote describes a similar setting but, additionally, includes the comparison of St. Petersburg officials ('peterburgskie činovniki')<sup>157</sup> and 'čuchonki'<sup>158</sup>, whose care of the babies lead to their suffocation ("задохлись"). At this point, the full possible implications of the concept of 'čuchonets' are lost in the English translation, which interprets them simply as Finns, or as in the case above, as "Finnish women". Concerning the full implications of the term, this essay proposes further viewing it as a general derogative term, or even term of abuse, used to mark undesirable individuals or social groups.

The imagining of the Finnish and 'čuchontsy' child-slaying mothers can further be seen in accordance with Dostojevskij's Christian mission. In his commentary on Dostojevskij's literary works and personal agendas, Mirskij puts forward the notion of the "victory of Christian Russia over the godless West [as] Dostoyévsky's political and historical faith."<sup>159</sup> In this regard, the image of a Finnish mother slaying her new-born babies can be viewed as the epitome of the godless Western Other. Hereby, Dostojevskij also contributes to the continuation and prevalence of specific traits of Russian cultural history. First and foremost, I have in mind the comparing of Russia to the West, or Europe to be precise, for purposes of building a Russian national identity.

Against the background of Finland's separateness, it is further interesting to note what Hirvasaho has written about the different connotations in the usage of the terms 'čuchonets' (in all its variations) and 'finljandets', whereof the latter designated Finns residing in Finland and speaking Finnish and by that – constituting a nation apart from Russia. In this regard, Hirvasaho puts forward the notion of the hybrid character of the 'čuchontsy'. She describes them as residing in the Russian Empire but as not being fully integrated into the imperial society, which stemmed from, among other things, them not having a good command of the Russian language. This, according to Hirvasaho, led to the Russian conceptualization of the 'čuchontsy' not being real Finns, marking

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<sup>157</sup> The English translation to "well-to-do Petersburg people" is slightly inaccurate, even though one can assume that 'officials' or 'public servants' usually are 'well-to-do people'.

<sup>158</sup> The form 'čuchonok' ('чухонок') signifies the genitive plural form of the term 'čuchonka', which is the female form of 'čuchonets' (ТТ).

<sup>159</sup> Mirskij, p. 283.

them, as Hirvasaho puts it, as being “‘contaminated’ with Russianness.”<sup>160</sup> In my estimation, this suggests them to be partial outsiders in terms of, firstly, belonging to the imagined community of Finland, and, secondly, the imagined community of the Russian Empire. In a figurative sense, the ‘čuchontsy’ are border crossers, representatives of both nations, but possess no clear home base and are thereby excluded from both national discourses. In this effect, I would like to add to Hirvasaho’s thoughts that the ‘čuchontsy’ are not only ‘contaminated’ by Russianness but, also, by Finnishness.

In terms of intertextual allusion, Dostojevskij can be viewed to reproduce the image and concept of Puškin’s ‘ubogij čuchonets’ (‘poor Finn’). But in addition to that, he can be seen to have modified it slightly. Whereas Puškin primarily used the image of the ‘čuchontsy’ to demarcate an external Other, Dostojevskij in turn has internalized the process by doing that depicts the community in question as an integral, though not fully-fledged, part of St. Petersburg and by that – the Russian Empire. Hence, this essay suggests considering Dostojevskij’s condescending tone in the imagining of the ‘čuchontsy’, especially in *Prestuplenie i nakazanie*, as an example of internal colonization. Dostojevskij’s prose both gives expression and mediates the process of the Russian Empire colonizing its own subjects, its own people. And here, the pejorative implications of the term ‘čuchonets’ serve as the lexical manifestation of that process. Also, the contamination of the ‘čuchontsy’ with both Finnishness and Russianness can be seen to serve this purpose. At this point, however, I again want to emphasize that the ‘čuchontsy’ by no means form a central motif in Dostojevskij’s writings. But, in my estimation, the findings of this paper can serve as an illustration of Dostojevskij’s world-view and, first and foremost, as further proof for his xenophobic tendencies. In conclusion, the Dostoyevskian prose selected for this study is viewed as adding to the stock of textual victory of Russian authors over both the external Finnish Other and, what is more, over the internal Other of the Petersburg ‘čuchonets’.

## 5. Conclusions

This essay conducted a study of Russian imperial rhetoric and the Russian colonization of Finland and the Finns. Here, the literary contributions of Aleksandr Puškin, the Russian national poet, and Fëdor Dostojevskij formed the material basis for the examination. At first, the issues were

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<sup>160</sup> Hirvasaho, p. 138.



approached by discussing the concepts of nation, imperialism, and colonialism in the context provided by the Russian Empire. Following the reflections of Anderson, 'nation' was defined as an imagined community. Also, it was marked that such communities are to be distinguished by the style in which they are imagined. In connection with this, the results of this study show that it was by means of a special 'language' that the Russian colonizer marked Finland and the Finns as a colonial subject. In this regard, the essay viewed and discussed a number of tropical devices, which carry the function of either inferiorizing the colonial subject or indicating their possession by the metropolitan centre. As an overarching colonization device, or also denoted as a 'device of nationalism', this essay discovered the practice of 'othering', which entails an imagined identity politics for a given and ideological or political aim.

In connection with this, the role of Puškin and Dostojevskij as builders of the Russian nation was emphasized. Even though the consumption and discussion of literature in 1800s Russia constituted an elite phenomenon, it can be argued that the ambition of both Puškin and Dostojevskij was to shape the Russian national identity and that they even continued doing so posthumously. The results of this essay suggest that Finland and the Finns were depicted in an inferior and negative light in order to define the Russian Empire and Russianness. Further, the Russian imperial consciousness was particularly prevalent in Puškin's *Klevetnikam Rossij* and, further, even in the long poem *Mednyj vsadnik*, where the colonization of the Finnish Other was taken for granted. In regard of the negative 'othering' of the Finns, Puškin and Dostojevskij can be seen to have deviated from the official imperial political course on Finland, which in the investigated timespan can be described as a course for the maintenance of the status quo of peaceful co-existence.

During the course of the historical contextualisation of this essay, the peculiar status of the Grand Duchy of Finland in comparison to other colonies of the Russian Empire was noted. This status manifested itself in significant rights of autonomy and the flourishing of a Finnish national culture. The image of a separate Finland was shown to have left its mark in the literary works of both Puškin and Dostojevskij – two trend-setting authors in Russia of the 1800s. Most significantly this is illustrated by Puškin's description of the Finn as the "sad foster-child of Nature's keeping" ("Печальный пасынок природы"). As regards the concept of colonialism in Russian context, the essay distinguished the practice of internal colonization as an integral part of Russian imperial politics. This practice could also be seen reflected in both Puškin's verse and Dostojevskij's prose.

As a difference between the two author's descriptions of the colonized Finnish people, this essay suggests that Puškin primarily applied strategies of 'othering' against an external Finnish Other, whereas Dostojevskij in turn applied a condescending tone in reference to a certain St. Petersburg related minority – the 'čuchontsy'. The term 'čuchonets' was coined as an integral part of the internal colonization processes discussed in this essay. This stems from the suggestion worked out by this essay that the term was not only used to denote Finns, but Estonians, the Karelo-Finnish population, and other socially undesirable groups, perhaps even ethnic Russians as well.

The study was additionally substantiated by the aim of this essay to address specific features of Russian cultural and political history. Especially the perception of being surrounded by enemies as a constant in Russian history constituted a remarkable notion, as illustrated best by the poems of Puškin. As to the infusion of great-power status and imperialistic ambition in Puškin's poems and in Dostojevskij's *Dnevnik pisatelja*, the Russian Federation with its contemporary imperial rhetoric and assertive foreign policy can be seen continuing on the path set by Russian cultural and political history.

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